

This draft of Nebraska's flexibility waiver serves as a framework to engage stakeholders in meaningful dialog in order to capture a true collaborative vision for Nebraska Education.

ESEA Flexibility Request



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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is offering each State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant State and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Department invites interested SEAs to request this flexibility pursuant to the authority in section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which allows the Secretary to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA and requests a waiver. Under this flexibility, the Department would grant waivers through the 2013–2014 school year, after which time an SEA may request an extension of this flexibility.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The Department will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate SEA requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

An SEA seeking approval to implement this flexibility must submit a high-quality request that addresses all aspects of the principles and waivers and, in each place where a plan is required, includes a high-quality plan. Consistent with ESEA section 9401(d)(1), the Secretary intends to grant waivers that are included in this flexibility through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. An SEA will be permitted to request an extension of the initial period of this flexibility prior to the start of the 2014–2015 school year unless this flexibility is superseded by reauthorization of the ESEA. The Department is asking SEAs to submit requests that include plans through the 2014–2015 school year in order to provide a complete picture of the SEA's reform efforts. The Department will not accept a request that meets only some of the principles of this flexibility.

This version of the *ESEA Flexibility Request* replaces the document originally issued on September 23, 2011 and revised on September 28, 2011. Through this revised version, the following section has been removed: 3.A, Option B (Option C has been renamed Option B). Additions have also been made to the following sections: Waivers and Assurances. Finally, this revised guidance modifies the following sections: Waivers; Assurances; 2.A.ii; 2.C.i; 2.D.i; 2.E.i; Table 2; 2.G; and 3.A, Options A and B.

High-Quality Request: A high-quality request for this flexibility is one that is comprehensive and coherent in its approach, and that clearly indicates how this flexibility will help an SEA and its LEAs improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

A high-quality request will (1) if an SEA has already met a principle, provide a description of how it has done so, including evidence as required; and (2) if an SEA has not yet met a principle, describe how it will meet the principle on the required timelines, including any progress to date. For example, an SEA that has not adopted minimum guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by the time it submits its request for the flexibility will need to provide a plan demonstrating that it will do so by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. In each such case, an SEA's plan must include, at a minimum, the following elements for each principle that the SEA has not yet met:

1. Key milestones and activities: Significant milestones to be achieved in order to meet a given principle, and essential activities to be accomplished in order to reach the key milestones. The SEA should also include any essential activities that have already been completed or key milestones that have already been reached so that reviewers can understand the context for and fully evaluate the SEA's plan to meet a given principle.
2. Detailed timeline: A specific schedule setting forth the dates on which key activities will begin and be completed and milestones will be achieved so that the SEA can meet the principle by the required date.
3. Party or parties responsible: Identification of the SEA staff (*e.g.*, position, title, or office) and, as appropriate, others who will be responsible for ensuring that each key activity is accomplished.

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4. Evidence: Where required, documentation to support the plan and demonstrate the SEA's progress in implementing the plan. This *ESEA Flexibility Request* indicates the specific evidence that the SEA must either include in its request or provide at a future reporting date.
5. Resources: Resources necessary to complete the key activities, including staff time and additional funding.
6. Significant obstacles: Any major obstacles that may hinder completion of key milestones and activities (e.g., State laws that need to be changed) and a plan to overcome them.

Included on page 19 of this document is an example of a format for a table that an SEA may use to submit a plan that is required for any principle of this flexibility that the SEA has not already met. An SEA that elects to use this format may also supplement the table with text that provides an overview of the plan.

An SEA should keep in mind the required timelines for meeting each principle and develop credible plans that allow for completion of the activities necessary to meet each principle. Although the plan for each principle will reflect that particular principle, as discussed above, an SEA should look across all plans to make sure that it puts forward a comprehensive and coherent request for this flexibility.

Preparing the Request: To prepare a high-quality request, it is extremely important that an SEA refer to all of the provided resources, including the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which includes the principles, definitions, and timelines; the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, which includes the criteria that will be used by the peer reviewers to determine if the request meets the principles of this flexibility; and the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions*, which provides additional guidance for SEAs in preparing their requests.

As used in this request form, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Each request must include:

- A table of contents and a list of attachments, using the forms on pages 1 and 2.
- The cover sheet (p. 3), waivers requested (p. 4-6), and assurances (p. 7-8).
- A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 9).
- Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 10-18). An SEA will enter narrative text in the text boxes provided, complete the required tables, and provide other required evidence. An SEA may supplement the narrative text in a text box with attachments, which will be included in an appendix. Any supplemental attachments that are included in an appendix must be referenced in the related narrative text.

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

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Process for Submitting the Request: An SEA must submit a request to the Department to receive the flexibility. This request form and other pertinent documents are available on the Department's Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/esca/flexibility>.

Electronic Submission: The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's request for the flexibility electronically. The SEA should submit it to the following address:
ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

Paper Submission: In the alternative, an SEA may submit the original and two copies of its request for the flexibility to the following address:

Patricia McKee, Acting Director
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in processing mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE

SEAs have multiple opportunities to submit requests for the flexibility. The submission dates are November 14, 2011, February 28, 2012, and an additional opportunity following the conclusion of the 2011–2012 school year.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS

The Department has conducted a number of webinars to assist SEAs in preparing their requests and to respond to questions. Please visit the Department's Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/esca/flexibility> for copies of previously conducted webinars and information on upcoming webinars.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

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Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA's flexibility request.

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Waivers		
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Overview of SEA's Request for the ESEA Flexibility		
Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students		
1.A	Adopt college- and career-ready standards	
1.B	Transition to college- and career-ready standards	
1.C	Develop and administer annual, statewide, aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth	
Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support		
2.A	Develop and implement a State-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support	
2.B	Set ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives	
2.C	Reward schools	
2.D	Priority schools	
2.E	Focus schools	
2.F	Provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools	
2.G	Build SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning	
Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership		
3.A	Develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	
3.B	Ensure LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	

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For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA's request, indicate "N/A" instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

LABEL	LIST OF ATTACHMENTS	PAGE
1	Notice to LEAs	
2	Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)	
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request	
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State's standards adoption process	
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State's standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	
6	State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	
7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups (if applicable)	
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)	
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted all of the guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	

COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: Click here to enter text.	Requester's Mailing Address: Click here to enter text.
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request Name: Click here to enter text. Position and Office: Click here to enter text. Contact's Mailing Address: Click here to enter text. Telephone: Click here to enter text. Fax: Click here to enter text. Email address: Click here to enter text.	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Click here to enter text.	Telephone: Click here to enter text.
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X_____	Date: Click here to enter text.
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

- ☐ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- ☐ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- ☐ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- ☐ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- ☐ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
- ☐ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or

restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

- ☐ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.
- ☐ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.
- ☐ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.
- ☐ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools that meet the definition of "priority schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

- ☐ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.
- ☐ 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all

subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

- ☐ 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not rank sufficiently high to be served.

DRAFT

ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

- ☐ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- ☐ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
- ☐ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- ☐ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
- ☐ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- ☐ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- ☐ 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)
- ☐ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

- ☐ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- ☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
- ☐ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).
- ☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).
- ☐ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.
- ☐ 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:

- ☐ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

Presentation:	Date(s):	Stakeholders Present:
AQuESTT Policy Forums: Six public input forums held across the state	9/25, 10/20, 10/21, 10/23, 10/27, 10/29	Representatives from K-12 districts, IHEs, school boards, community members (252 participants)
Statewide Data Cadre	12/1	Representatives from NDE/ESUs/ IHEs
AdvancED State Council	12/12	Representatives from public/private K-12 districts, IHEs, ESUs
Educational Service Unit #9	12/15	Area principals and superintendents
Educational Service Unit #1	1/13	ESU staff
State Accreditation Committee	1/16	Representatives from K-12 districts, ESUs, IHEs, community, school boards
Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium	1/17	Representatives from K-12 districts, IHEs, community members
ESU Professional Development Organization	1/20	Representatives from all Nebraska Educational Service Units

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

Presentation:	Date(s):	Stakeholders Present:
AQuESTT Policy Forums: Six public input forums held across the state	9/25, 10/20, 10/21, 10/23, 10/27, 10/29	Representatives from K-12 districts, IHEs, school boards, community members
State Accreditation Committee	1/16	Representatives from K-12 districts, ESUs, IHEs, community, school boards
Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium	1/17	Representatives from K-12 districts, IHEs, community members

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☐ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

In order to lead and support in the preparation of all Nebraskans for earning, learning and living, the Nebraska Department of Education seeks flexibility from No Child Left Behind in order to build a more robust system of support and continuous improvement. Understanding that success for learners is not limited to a single definition or mandate, we strive to engage learners with a systemic approach to listening with intent to meet learner's expectations and interests. A learner focused education system alleviates burden through clarity of communication, automation of data, reporting, and feedback. A system designed for every student and simultaneously the student is contributing to designing the system.

Nebraska's waiver aims to provide a unified vision for Nebraska education. The vision entails building a system of support by leveraging strong partnerships among our districts, with our learners, and in our communities. This collaborative model promotes and fosters sharing and strong evaluation to highlight areas of expertise and success. Through the use of systematic evaluation and continuous improvement the model cultivates opportunities to share effective policies and practices throughout the statewide system. A statewide education system requires a common instructional framework, rigorous college and career ready standards, and aligned professional learning in order to move ideas and build capacity with fidelity.

Shifting administrative burden with an automated infrastructure allows decision making to preside precisely where it should, at student level and in the hands and expertise of professional educators who design and deliver instruction to meet the unique needs of Nebraska students. The automated system makes use of education data and displays it in various degrees of sophistication to facilitate understanding for multiple stakeholders across the state. Dubbed the Cloud Learning environment, this integrated system with single sign connects systems that have previously been used in isolation. Stakeholders will have personalized views of data and the support applications that provide a clean vision of instructional materials aligned with curriculum, formative assessment tools, students personal learning goals, professional learning opportunities, teacher/principal evaluations and continuous school improvement goals.

We are focused on a broader approach to accountability, an approach that encompasses teaching and learning as well as systems of support. Nebraska's AQuESTT (A Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow) outlined by our state board of education, stakeholders across the state, and lawmakers looks across six tenets that are foundational for constructing a tightly networked system of continuous improvement. Nebraska's Rule 10, *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools*, has been revised to include the AQuESTT model--its tenets, classification rounds, and protocols. By expanding areas and tools of measurement, we feel more confident to be able to identify districts with opportunities for growth and excess capacity that can be shared across the state. The development of AQuESTT has removed barriers and provided channels of communication in order to move ideas and to help all schools build capacity with fluidity across the state.

Above all, Nebraska's waiver is accountable to delivering equity and sustainability. As populations continue to shift and change dynamically throughout our state, the department of education will stay committed to identifying areas to close the gaps in accountability, services, and access to the most advanced education and resources available. All stakeholders are empowered to participate and held accountable for ensuring that every Nebraska child has access to a quality education.

The primary goal of Nebraska's waiver is system-wide continuous improvement that is grounded in:

- Systematic professional learning for teachers, principals, and governing boards that is informed by evidence.
- Systems of support
- Evaluation that leads to the improvement and accountability of processes, programs, and systems (Yarborough et al., 2010, xxv).
- Innovation that invites shared accountability and collaboration among schools and communities in order to support the achievement of all students in Nebraska.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A

☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.

- i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)

Option B

☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.

- i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)
- ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

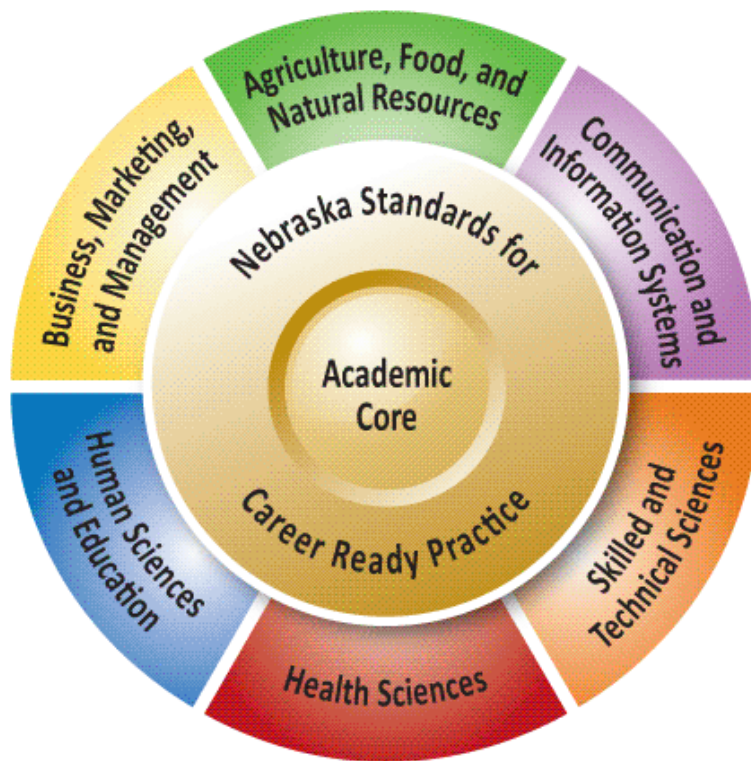
1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

The mission of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is to “lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.” Even though the mission itself

is clear, Nebraska continues to face the challenges associated with preparing college and career ready students. We recognize that such preparation requires more than rigorous standards, checkpoints that measure learning and growth, or a determination to provide access and equity across the system. Today's students must graduate high school with the knowledge and skills required for entrance and success in postsecondary education, and they also need to possess the technical skills and knowledge required for employment in high demand sectors.

When considering approaches to ensuring college and career readiness, educational systems must first consider utilizing strategies that keep students engaged and working towards completion of their high school diploma. Additionally, schools must provide students with opportunities to learn the knowledge and skills required for jobs in high demand industries. Nebraska school systems are well situated for meeting the challenge of preparing students for a competitive job market through Career and Technical Education. Better known as Nebraska Career Education (NCE), Nebraska's Career Education system engages students and prepares them college and career by connecting core academics with relevant content and experiences. Additionally, the NCE team promotes collaboration among schools, businesses, and local communities to develop a skilled workforce that will sustain and grow Nebraska's economy. The Nebraska Career Education Model is the framework used for career Education in Nebraska. The model organizes the 16 National Career Clusters into six Career Fields of entrepreneurship and employment based on similarity of knowledge and skills. Each of Nebraska's 249 school districts, six community colleges, and the University of Nebraska system all offer career education courses and/or programs. This has created opportunities for all Nebraska students, including those in rural communities, to acquire the knowledge and skills required for entrance into postsecondary education and employment in high demand sectors. In fact, in 2011-2012, more than 60% of Nebraska students in grades 7-12 took at least one career education course and about one-third of Nebraska 12th graders had taken three or more courses in the same career area.



Career Education is a key component of Nebraska's educational system. Consistent with national data illustrating that CTE positively impacts student engagement and lowers the dropout rate, participation in Career Education programs has a significant impact on the likelihood that Nebraska students will graduate high school. Career Education concentrators (i.e. a student who has earned three or more credits in a single CTE program of study) drop out of school at a lower rate than the Nebraska student population as a whole. Specifically, in 2011-2012, 0.98% of 12th graders concentrating in Career Education dropped out of school as compared to 4.83% of 12th graders NOT concentrating in Career Education (Nebraska Department of Education, 2013). Furthermore, 82% of Nebraska high school seniors completed an approved program of study and met district requirements for a high school diploma. In comparison, 99% of Nebraska Career Education concentrators completed an approved program of study and met district requirements for a high school diploma.

Nebraska's vision is a statewide education system that is accountable for students' learning, completion of high school, and ultimately, being college and career ready. There will continue to be an intentional focus on aligning and integrating core academic standards with Nebraska's Career Readiness Standards (<http://www.education.ne.gov/nce/Standards.html>) with the aim of meaningfully connecting academic content to career applications and expectations.

Nebraska's Standards and Assessment Context:

In April 2008, the Nebraska State Legislature passed into state law Legislative Bill 1157, which changed previous provisions related to standards, assessment, and reporting. Specific to standards, the legislation stated that:

- The State Board of Education shall adopt measurable academic content standards for at least the grade levels required for statewide assessment. The standards shall cover the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The standards adopted shall be sufficiently clear and measurable to be used for testing student performance with respect to mastery of the content described in the state standards.
- The State Board of Education shall develop a plan to review and update standards for each content area every five years.
- The State Board of Education shall review and update the standards in reading by July 1, 2009, the standards in mathematics by July 1, 2010, and these standards in all other content areas by July 1, 2013.

Nebraska's English Language Arts and Mathematics standards were both adopted in 2009. A unified system of content standards have become a common expectation for all students across the state that align with Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessments in grades 3-8 and in the third year of high school. Curriculum decisions, including textbook and program selection remain a piece of Nebraska's local control tradition, enabling school districts to develop curricular programs in response to their unique community contexts with support from regional Educational Service Units (ESUs) and the Nebraska Department of Education.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) facilitates the standards creation and revision process. Involving representatives from institutions of higher education (IHEs), regional Educational Service Units (ESUs), and practitioners, this process cultivates stakeholder dialogue and engagement in the standards throughout the entire revision process. Experts representing Special Education and English Language Learning work among content area specialists to ensure access and support for students' unique learning needs. Nebraska's Career Readiness team and business and industry representatives contribute to this process to ensure that standards align with the skills necessary in the world of work.

Once new standards have been approved, NDE and regional ESUs provide guidance as well as support to local districts for the implementation of new content standards. The State's *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools* (Rule 10) requires schools to implement replacement academic content adopt within one year of State Board approval and adoption (Nebraska Revised Statute Section 004.01B). State assessments aligned with new content standards become fully operational the following year.

Nebraska's Timeline for Transitioning to College Career Ready Standards and Assessments:

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of ELA College and Career Ready Standards• Initial implementation of NeSA-ELA assessment• Revision of Mathematics standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full implementation of College and Career aligned NeSA-ELA assessment• Approval of College and Career Ready Mathematics standards• Initial implementation of NeSA-M• Revision of Science standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full implementation of College and Career aligned NeSA-Math assessment• Approval of College and Career Ready Science standards• Initial implementation of NeSA-Science assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full implementation of College and Career ready aligned NeSA-Science assessment

English/Language Arts College and Career Ready Standards:

Nebraska's English Language Arts Standards were the first content area to fully transition to college and career ready standards. Revision began in the fall of 2013 with representatives from Nebraska institutions of higher education reviewing the 2009 standards and identifying areas for improvement. With this feedback, a writing group comprised of Nebraska K-16 educators, administrators and specialists went to work. The authors represented all regions of Nebraska, all levels of education, all sizes of school districts as well as the diverse populations of the state. The existing standards were reviewed against exemplary standards from other states, along with information from ACT, SAT, the NAEP Framework, and information from nationally known researchers.

Alignment Studies:

Nebraska has not adopted the Common Core. In March 2013, Nebraska State Board of Education authorized McRel (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning) to complete an alignment study to examine recognized college readiness standards and benchmarks and Nebraska's legacy English Language Arts and Mathematics standards for each grade level. According to this study, the The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS-ELA) are strongly aligned to the 2009 Nebraska English Language Arts Standards (NELAS) in the general concepts and content necessary for students to be college and career ready by the end of their K-12 schooling experience.

While both sets of standards outline the skills and content that should be mastered in reading, writing, and oral communications (speaking, listening, and reciprocal communication), the way the standards are organized differs from the CCSS-ELA to the NELAS. The chief differences between the two sets of standards can be categorized in three ways:

- Organization/Placement of concepts or content
- Specificity
- Emphasis on specific genres of writing

The overall alignment of the two sets of standards is comparable with only three percent of the CCSS-ELA not being addressed by comparable Nebraska Standards and ten percent of the Nebraska Standards not addressed in the Common Core. The greatest differences between the standards being Nebraska's emphasis on specific reading strategies, handwriting skills, and the skills and knowledge necessary for effective and appropriate digital communication

Standards Revision Process and Engagement with Stakeholders:

Stakeholders are involved throughout the standards review and revision process in Nebraska. Beyond the representatives working on the writing team, several opportunities for educators and the general public to offer comments and suggestions were made available at various points throughout the development process.

A web-based survey was available for several weeks and a public input session was held at seven locations via distance technology. Representatives from business and industry were also invited to a day-long meeting to review the standards specifically for career readiness. Designated higher education representatives were asked to certify that the standards met college and career readiness expectations as a final step before the final draft was forwarded to the State Board for approval. College and Career Ready English Language Arts (ELA) standards were approved by the State Board of Education in September 2014, for initial implementation in the 2014-2015 school year and full implementation the 2015-2016 school year.

Nebraska's 2014 ELA standards foster deeper thinking, encourage innovation, and require students to support their thinking with evidence from the text or other sources. They also reflect the growing role of digital technology in student's lives by requiring schools to give students the opportunity to use technology effectively as a part of their learning. When it comes to the numbers, 75% of the standards are the same or very similar to the 2009 legacy standards. The revised and new standards serve to better describe expectations that will promote readiness for college and career readiness

Mathematics College and Career Ready Standards:

Nebraska's Mathematics standards are currently under review with the same process for revision and approval as English/Language Arts. Science standards will be up for review in 2015-2016.

Mathematics Standards Revision Timeline:

Fall 2014	Representatives from IHEs reviewed the legacy standards and made initial recommendations for the Standards Writing Team
Fall/Winter 2014-2015	Standards Revision group comprised of K-16 administrators and teachers and representatives from ESUs, Special Education, ELL, and career and industry working on the new college and career standards.
Spring 2015	Stakeholder input/public forums
Summer 2015	Final Revisions
Fall 2015	Presentation for Nebraska State Board approval
2015-2016	Initial Implementation of Math Standards
2016-2017	Full Implementation of Math Standards

Alignment Study:

Mid-Continent Research also reviewed Nebraska's 2009 Mathematics standards, for alignment for college and career readiness for Education and Learning (McRel) in 2013. The organization and placement of concepts or content in Nebraska's state mathematics standards contrasts with other recognized CCR standards but until high school, there is strong alignment. Once students reach high school Common Core Standards include additional advanced mathematics and eight Mathematical Practices that reflect the characteristics of a good mathematician:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning
- 9.

The standards revision group made up of K-16 administration, teachers and stakeholders currently working to revise Nebraska's mathematics standards have developed unique Nebraska mathematics practices as well as ways to contextualize instruction with real-world career applications. This group has been striving to align the mathematics standards with Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice (adopted by the State Board of Education in May 2010). They will meet with representatives from business and labor in an effort to connect content represented in standards across grade levels to applications in a range of career fields.

Standards Revision Process and Engagement with Stakeholders:

Nebraska's process for standard review includes practitioners, representatives from IHEs, as well as representation from ESUs, and College and Career, ELL and Special Education teams from NDE. Proposed standards revisions will be presented to public for comment in forums at locations across the State. Based on stakeholder feedback, Standards will again be revised before the State Board of Education submits them for final approval. Standards are available to the public on the NDE website and the new ELA standards are available in both a student friendly and family friendly format.

Instructional Materials and Support:

Nebraska's local school districts exercise local control and decision-making in regard to their selection of curriculum and assessment tools outside of required annual Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) Assessments. The Nebraska Department of Education provides tools and resources for districts and Educational Service Units (ESUs) provide instructional materials and support for districts as they develop and continually improve their curriculum. *NDE's Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools* (Rule 10) does require that the instructional program of the school system is based on standards, is approved by the local school board, and that documents outlining a curriculum are on file in each school building and that each staff member is provided a copy of the standards (004.01A). Beyond that expectation, NDE encourages districts to have a curriculum that draws upon research and best practice and is comprehensive, coordinated, and sequential as well as targeted toward on the unique needs of all students (004.01 Quality Indicator).

Curriculum and Assessment Support:

NDE's Curriculum and Instruction team has created a Standards Instructional Tool (SIT) as a way to provide content related to standards to local districts. This tool provides lessons aligned to standards and indicators. The development of the Nebraska Standards Instructional Tool followed the same process used in the academic standards and assessment development; relying on the expertise of classroom educators in Nebraska. Groups of teachers worked together alongside Department personnel to identify the Nebraska Language Arts and Mathematics standards most in need of additional resources. Resources include:

- A glossary of key words
- Further definitions/explanations of the indicators when warranted
- Classroom instructional resources (sample exercises, activities, web links, videos, etc.) that can be used and adapted to fit the needs of a particular teacher or to more closely align to a local school or district's curriculum.
-

Educators need to see the curriculum, assessment, and instructional processes linked together – as ongoing, continuous and grounded inside each classroom. NDE joined with DRC, with school districts, and Educational Service Units to build a state system of assessment to “wrap around” the summative NeSA tests given in the spring. The system, Check4Learning (C4L), is based upon a state-level item bank of locally developed multiple-choice questions in reading, mathematics and science. Participation is strictly voluntary and left to the district to decide.

Districts choosing to participate will be able to select items that match the tested indicators and build interim assessments that may be given at point of instruction at any time in the year. This process cultivates a deeper understanding of standards and indicators as well as assessment knowledge in practitioners across the state that participate for their districts.

C4L provides instantaneous results to students and reports to teachers about item analysis, individual classroom, building, or district reports. The intent will be for teachers to have data to adjust or change instruction. The system is a powerful tool to inform and link the curriculum and instructional process to assessment.

Flexibility from NCLB opens the opportunity to align assessment and stakeholder engagement and a content repository, and a learning management system. With a single sign-on, any district in the state will have access a hub for teachers where they can access a data dashboard that can provide formative assessment, find and access lessons that connect to standards, as well as a learning management tool that connect teachers to mentoring and collaboration and students to equitable learning opportunities whether they are in an urban or rural context.

Engagement with Institutions of Higher Education:

<p>“I paid particular attention to the writing standards for Grades 11-12. If students have developed the skills necessary to meet these standards, they will be prepared to meet the demands of a freshman-level college composition course.” --State College Representative</p>

<p>“ I have been co-chairing a PFI (Partnership for Innovation) grant regarding foundational education at the Nebraska Community Colleges over the past year, and based on discussions from foundational English instructors, I feel that these updated standards will help students graduate from high school and be truly college-ready.” --Community College System Representative</p>

Beyond including representatives from institutions of higher education (IHEs) in the review and redrafting of content standards, NDE engages Nebraska’s 16 IHEs through the Nebraska Association for Colleges for Colleges of Teacher Education (NACTE), which meets 3-4 times a year. The Nebraska State Department of Education’s IHE advisory group the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education (NCTE) is made up of one-third administrators, representatives from teacher education, and teacher-practitioners. This 48-member advisory group meets three times a year and their work is to revise rules and make general recommendation to the board. Representatives from IHEs are also invited to attend the statewide ESU Professional Development Organization meetings. In these ways, there is opportunity for dialogue and feedback regarding revised content standards and assessments, statewide professional development initiatives, and changes to Rule or revision of certificates or endorsements.

Linguistic Demands for Students with Limited English Proficiency:

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards were adopted by Nebraska in December 2013 for initial implementation in the 2014-2015 school year and full implementation in the 2015-2016 school year. Nebraska's *Rule 15: Regulations and Procedures for the Education of Students with Limited English Proficiency in Public Schools* outlines requirements and its implementation guide provides support for schools in the state as they address the unique needs of students acquiring English.

Nebraska's standards come from work completed by The Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) in collaboration with WestEd and the Understanding Language Initiative at Stanford University who worked to develop a new set of English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. The ELP Standards, developed for K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grades, highlight and amplify the critical language, knowledge about language, and skills using language that are in college-and-career-ready standards and that are necessary for English language learners (ELLs) to be successful in schools. The 10 ELP Standards highlight a strategic set of language functions (what students do with language to accomplish content-specific tasks) and language forms (vocabulary, grammar, and discourse specific to a particular content area or discipline) which are needed by ELLs as they develop competence in the practices associated with English language arts (ELA) & literacy, mathematics, and science (Bunch, Kiber, & Pimentel, 2013; CCSSO, 2012; Lee, Quinn, & Valdez, 2013; Moschkovich, 2012; van Lier & Walqui, 2012). The five ELP levels for each of the ELP Standards address the question, "What might an ELL's language use look like at each ELP level as he or she progresses toward independent participation in grade-appropriate activities?"

Guiding Principles:

Potential:	ELLs have the same potential as native speakers of English to engage in cognitively complex tasks. Regardless of ELP level, all ELLs need access to challenging, grade-appropriate curriculum, instruction, and assessment and benefit from activities requiring them to create linguistic output (Ellis, 2008a; 2008b). Even though ELLs will produce language that includes features that distinguish them from their native-English-speaking peers, "it is possible [for ELLs] to achieve the standards for college-and career readiness" (NGA Center and CCSSO, 2010b, p. 1).
Funds of Knowledge:	ELLs' primary languages and other social, cultural, and linguistic background knowledge and resources (i.e., their "funds of knowledge" [Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992]) are useful tools to help them navigate back and forth among their schools and their communities' valuable resources as they develop the social, cultural, and linguistic competencies required for effective communication in English. In particular, an awareness of culture should be embedded within curriculum, instruction, an assessment provided to ELLs since

	<p>“the more one knows about the other language and culture, the greater the chances of creating the appropriate cultural interpretation of a written or spoken text” (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006, p. 37).</p>
Diversity:	<p>A student’s designated ELP level represents a typical current performance level, not a fixed status. An English language proficiency level does not identify a student (e.g., “Level 1 student”), but rather identifies what a student knows and can do at a particular stage of English language development, for example, “a student at Level 1” or “a student whose listening performance is at Level 1.” Progress in acquiring English may vary depending upon program type, age at which entered program, initial English proficiency level, native language literacy, and other factors (Bailey & Heritage, 2010; Byrnes & Canale, 1987; Lowe & Stansfield, 1988). Within these ELP Standards, we assume simultaneous development of language and content-area knowledge, skills, and abilities. ELLs do not need to wait until their ELP is sufficiently developed to participate in content area instruction and assessment. “Research has shown that ELLs can develop literacy in English even as their oral proficiency in English develops” (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2013, p. 15).</p>
Scaffolding:	<p>ELLs at all levels of ELP should be provided with scaffolding in order to reach the next reasonable proficiency level as they develop grade-appropriate language capacities, particularly those that involve content-specific vocabulary and registers. The type and intensity of the scaffolding provided will depend on each student’s ability to undertake the particular task independently while continuing to uphold appropriate complexity for the student.</p>
Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE):	<p>ELLs with limited or interrupted formal education must be provided access to targeted supports that allow them to develop foundational literacy skills in an accelerated time frame (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Educators can refer to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA section “Reading: Foundational Skills” (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) for this purpose.</p>
Special Needs:	<p>ELLs with disabilities can benefit from English language development services (and it is recommended that language development goals be a part of their Individualized Education Plans [IEPs]). Educators should be aware that these students may take slightly different paths toward English language proficiency.</p>
Access Supports and Accommodations:	<p>Based on their individual needs, all ELLs, including ELLs with disabilities, should be provided access supports and accommodations</p>

	for assessments, so that their assessment results are valid and reflect what they know and can do. Educators should be aware that these access supports and accommodations can be used in classroom instruction and assessment to ensure that students have access to instruction and assessment based on the ELP Standards. When identifying the access supports and accommodations that should be considered for ELLs and ELLs with IEPs or 504 plans during classroom instruction and assessment, it is particularly useful to consider ELL needs in relation to receptive and productive modalities.
Multimedia, Technology, and New Literacies:	New understandings around literacy (e.g., visual and digital literacies) have emerged around use of information and communication technologies (International Reading Association, 2009). Relevant, strategic, and appropriate multimedia tools and technology, aligned to the ELP Standards, should be integrated into the design of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for ELLs.

The 10 ELP Standards are designed for collaborative use by English as a second language (ESL)/English language development (ELD) and content area teachers in both English language development and content-area instruction. Explicit recognition that language acquisition takes place across the content areas fosters collaboration among educators and benefits ELLs' learning experiences. Content area teachers must understand and leverage the language and literacy practices found in science, mathematics, history/social studies, and the language arts to enhance students' engagement with rich content and fuel their academic performance. ESL teachers must cultivate a deeper knowledge of the disciplinary language that ELL students need, and help their students to grow in using it. In this way, ELLs will have greater access to meeting college and career readiness standards.

Nebraska's ELL Professional Development Network:

In 2008, teams representing school districts, Educational Service Units and universities/state colleges participated in the English Language Learner Leadership Institute. The goal of the Institute was to integrate training in Balanced Leadership and Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners. Since that time Nebraska has used a train the trainers model with a core ELL Professional Development network. These trainers are available to provide staff development for school districts across the state. In 2013, the group of professional developers expanded with the goal of having representation from all Title III served Districts and Consortia. The trainers continue to be supported by Jane Hill and the North Central Comprehensive Center as well as the Nebraska Department of *that Works with English Language Learners*, the team members may also provide trainings on other ELL-related topics such as developing Academic Language and the new Nebraska English Language Proficiency Standards and implementation of Rule 15.

English Language Proficiency Next Generation Assessment: ELPA21

Nebraska is one of eleven states involved with the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) Consortium that is currently building an assessment tool aligned with the ELP Standards (<http://www.elpa21.org/>). The assessment will measure growth based on the new ELP standards and provide feedback to inform instruction so ELLs have the opportunity graduate high school college and career ready.

The ELPA21 assessment system, which includes a screener and summative assessments, will support ELLs by determining initial placement; identifying the need for reassessment for continued placement; providing information that can help guide instruction, growth, and reclassification/exit; and providing accountability for the system and states” (<http://www.elpa21.org/>) The ELPA21 will field test in the 2014-2015 school year and will be fully operational in the 2015-2016 school year. Professional Development related to the test will be delivered through Nebraska’s ELL Professional Development network’s train the trainer model. Educators will also be able to access training modules built into the testing system.

Access and Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

NDE representatives and content area teachers with Special Education expertise participate in standards revision and assessment development. Nebraska is a local-control state and so districts design curriculum and select intervention and support strategies. Educational Service Units (ESUs) provide support for districts’ curriculum design and professional development by region.

Professional Learning:

Professional learning is coordinated by districts, ESUs, and specialized areas of the Nebraska Department of Education. Nebraska’s *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools* (Rule 10) requires that each local school district annually “conducts or arranges staff development and that each teacher participate in at least ten hours of staff development each year” (007.07A). The role of Nebraska’s regional Education Service Units (ESUs) according to NDE’s *Regulations for the Accreditation of Educational Service Units* (Rule 84) is to provide “staff development related to improving the achievement of all students including achievement of students in poverty and students with diverse backgrounds; technology, including distance education services; and instructional materials services” (008.01A). The intent is that these core services will improve teaching and learning, support schools in their continuous improvement goals, and provide access to professional learning and support in order for the state to meet its goals and initiatives for students.

Professional learning for principals is primarily supported by NDE’s partnership with the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) and regional Educational Service Units. NCSA representatives lead sessions at annual Continuous Improvement Workshops hosted by NDE, presenting on standards of improvement related to governance and leadership. ESUs provide targeted support for instructional leadership, including training in Marzano’s Effective School Leadership and mentorship for new principals in the region.

Opportunities and Vision

The Nebraska Department of Education recognizes that the lack of systematic professional development is a barrier to helping teachers and districts prepare students to be college and career ready. Currently, professional development is provided by different areas of the department independent of one another. In addition, ESUs also provide professional development based on perceived needs within districts. A more systematic evaluative approach to professional development will provide more strategic methods to professional learning.

1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B	Option C
<input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition. i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school	<input type="checkbox"/> The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)

	in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.	
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Legislative Bill 1157 passed by the 2008 Nebraska Legislature (Nebraska Revised Statute Section 79-760.03) required a statewide assessment of the Nebraska academic content standards for reading, mathematics, science, and writing in Nebraska’s K-12 public schools. The new assessment system was named NeSA (Nebraska State Accountability), with NeSA-R for reading assessments, NeSA-M for mathematics, NeSA-S for science, and NeSA-W for writing. NeSA replaced previous school-based assessments for purposes of local, state, and federal accountability. The first generation NeSA RMS consists entirely of multiple choice items administered online when possible.

Nebraska statute requires academic standards-revisions in five-year rotating cycles, which means that assessments follow in alignment with new standards in a five-year rotation (Nebraska Revised Statute Section 79-760.01). The Nebraska State Board of Education approved new English Language Arts (ELA) CCR aligned standards in September 2014 and so NDE has moved forward with development of a new assessment that will be offered as a transition test in the 2015-2016 school year and will be implemented as a fully revised assessment in the 2016-2017 school year. Mathematics standards are under review and revision in the 2014-2015 school year. NDE will follow the same process to develop a transitional assessment that will be rolled out in the 2016-2017 school year with a full statewide implementation of a new assessment in the 2017-2018 school year.

This is the State’s second round developing Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessments. As in the past, NDE will collaborate with key partners the Governor’s appointed Technical Advisory Committee, a committee of state practitioners and administrators, and Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to develop the state’s next generation, aligned, high-quality assessments.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), first appointed by the Governor in 2008, is to be made up of “three nationally recognized experts in educational assessment and measurement, one administrator from a school in Nebraska, and one teacher from a school in Nebraska. The committee is to “Review the statewide assessment instruments and advise the Governor, the state board, and the State Department of Education on the development of statewide assessment instruments and the statewide assessment” (Nebraska Revised Statute Section 79-760.03). Current members of the TAC include:

- Chair: Brian Gong, National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment
- Chad Buckendahl, Alpine Testing Solutions
- Richard Sawyer, ACT
- Linda Poole--Teacher, Papillion-LaVista Public Schools
- Frank Harwood--Superintendent, Bellevue Public Schools

NePAS Elementary Grade-Level Configuration (Grades 3-5) NePAS Middle Grade-Level Configuration (Grades 6-8)		Reporting Measures	Ranked
Status	NeSA Reading	Average Scale Score	Yes
	NeSA Math	Average Scale Score	Yes
	NeSA Science	Average Scale Score	Yes
	NeSA Writing	Average Scale Score	Yes
Improvement	NeSA Reading	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
	NeSA Math	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
	NeSA Science	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
	NeSA Writing	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
Growth	NeSA Reading	Average of Differences in Scale Score	Yes
	NeSA Math	Average of Differences in Scale Score	Yes
Participation	NeSA Reading	Met/Not Met	No
	NeSA Math	Met/Not Met	No
	NeSA Science	Met/Not Met	No
	NeSA Writing	Met/Not Met	No

Nebraska has a long-tradition of engaging practitioners in the development of policy that will affect schools. This has included practitioner participation in the creation of standards, assessments, evaluation, and Nebraska's new accountability model: AQuESTT. This engagement has also been codified in Nebraska statute regarding assessment: "The state board shall appoint committees of teachers, from each appropriate subject area, and administrators to assist in the development of statewide assessment instruments required by the act" (Nebraska Revised Statute Section 79-760.03.14). The Nebraska Department of Education has been collecting

input from practitioners through a Nebraska educator assessment survey and will include practitioners in item-writing and assessment redesign.

An Assessment and Accountability Advisory committee was also formed to be an ongoing advisory group that will meet twice a year to discuss and give recommendations for NeSA testing and reporting, technology for testing, and accountability. It includes superintendents, administrators, district assessment contacts, program directors, technology representatives from ESUs and school districts, policy partners, and NDE personnel.

NePAS Secondary Grade-Level Configuration (Grades 9-12)		Reporting Measures	Ranked
Status	Average NeSA Reading	Average Scale Score	Yes
	Average NeSA Math	Average Scale Score	Yes
	Average NeSA Science	Average Scale Score	Yes
	Average NeSA Writing	Average Scale Score	Yes
Improvement	Average NeSA Reading	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
	Average NeSA Math	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
	Average NeSA Science	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
	Average NeSA Writing	Difference of Average Scale Score	Yes
Graduation Rate	4-Year	Percent	Yes
	6-Year	Percent	Yes
Participation	NeSA Reading	Met/Not Met	No
	NeSA Math	Met/Not Met	No
	NeSA Science	Met/Not Met	No
	NeSA Writing	Met/Not Met	No

NDE's continued partnership with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) as its test development vendor, ensures that the state meets the requirements that state tests are built for comparative accountability outlined in the amended Quality Education Act (79-760).

Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS) as of August 2012:

For each school district and NePAS “**grade-level configuration**” (as defined below) within a district, the State of the Schools Report [SOSR] will display the calculations of scale scores for all NeSA performance indicators to include status, growth, and improvement. Grades 3 and 11 will not include growth. Graduation rate will be calculated as a percentage and will include a display of school district enrollment for grades 9-12. Participation will be indicated as Met or Not Met. Except for participation, each indicator for the district and each NePAS grade-level configuration within the district will receive a state ranking.

Process to Develop Next Generation Assessments and Accountability:

NDE, with guidance from the TAC and Committee of practitioners and support from DRC, is in the process of revising NeSA's Technical Report in order to align the test blueprints with new content standards and to increase depth of knowledge. Current core test items aligned with legacy (2009) Nebraska Language Arts Standards will be compared to (2014) revised college and career ready Nebraska English Language Arts Standards and indicators using a revised table of specifications with increased depth. The process for transitioning the Nebraska State Accountability Reading assessment NeSA-R to NeSA-ELA will be followed again once CCR Mathematics standards have been approved by the Nebraska State Board of Education (Fall 2015). First generation NeSA assessments used traditional multiple choice test questions; the next generation NeSA assessments aligned to college and career ready standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics will include technology enhanced questions such as evidence-based selected response items and auto-scored constructed response test questions.

New Item Types:

CCR aligned next generation NeSA assessments will include technology enhanced item types as one way to increase rigor:

Evidence-Based Selected Response:

These questions will be designed with two parts. A student will read a passage and respond to a multiple-choice item and determine the best response among four choices. The student will then need to provide text-evidence from the passage in order to select one or more answers based on her selection in part one.

Auto-Scored Constructed Response:

In this item design, students must use higher level thinking skills through dynamic tasks. Items will be enabled with a variety of features include drag and drop, hot-spot, and a selection of multiple answers from drop-down menus.

Transition Plan:**NeSA-R 2016 Transition and Field Test:**

During the first transition year the core test items in the NeSA-R test will be based on the legacy item bank but will be aligned to both legacy (2009) Nebraska Language Arts Standards and the revised (2014) Nebraska English Language Arts Standards. There will be embedded field test items aligned with the revised (2014) ELA standards. A committee of practitioners and administrators will develop these items in the summer of 2015.

NeSA-ELA 2017 Fully Transitioned Test:

In this fully transitioned test, all core items will be aligned to the revised college and career ready (2014) Nebraska English Language Arts Standards. Items used as field test items will be aligned to both the legacy (2009) Nebraska Language Arts Standards and the revised (2014) Nebraska English Language Arts Standards. Items that will be used as field test questions in the spring 2017 fully transitioned test will be developed and reviewed by a committee of practitioners and administrators in the summer of 2017.

Following administration of both the field test and fully transitioned test, DRC will support test analysis at both the item and student level, including calibrating, scaling, and equating. They will also lead the standard setting process. A range of cut scores will be considered for each tested grade level with final scores determined by the percentages of students who score in one of three performance levels on the tests:

- Exceeds the Standards
- Meets the Standards
- Below the Standards

Access for Students with Disabilities:

All students are expected to participate in the Nebraska State Accountability System, NeSA. Students with disabilities may access test accommodations outlined in the Nebraska State Accountability Approved Accommodations Document. Testing accommodations are changes to testing procedures, testing materials, or the testing situation in order to allow the student meaningful participation in an assessment (Acosta, B., Rivera, C., Shafer Wilner, L., and Staehel Fenner, D. . 2008). Accommodations provided to students with disabilities must be specified in the student's IEP and used during instruction throughout the year.

Students who qualify may be tested using an alternate assessment, the NeSA-AA. The NeSA-AA has been designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities or multi-handicapping conditions (generally less than 1% of the overall student population). This is a separate paper/pencil test that appropriately measures skills tied to the academic content standards. If the IEP team determines that a student is to take the alternate assessment, that rationale shall be included in the student's IEP (Rule 51- 007.07A6). In order to be consistent with the NeSA-R, NeSA-M, and NeSA-S tests, alternative assessments for reading, mathematics, and science (NeSA-AAR, NeSA--AAM, NeSA--AAS) were developed in conjunction with the tests for general education.

Access for ELL Students:

Students who have a native language other than English or who come from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their level of English proficiency may access test accommodations outlined in the Nebraska State Accountability Approved Accommodations Document. Accommodations are one of the primary ways for ensuring that ELLs who are included in state reading, mathematics, and science assessments are more likely to be tested on their knowledge of content rather than their English language proficiency. Accommodations may include direct linguistic support such as adjustments to the text of the assessment with the intent of reducing the linguistic load necessary to access the content of the test or allowing a student to take the test in his or her native language. Accommodations may also be indirect linguistic support, such as providing adjustments to testing environment or schedule to allow ELLs to more efficiently use their linguistic resources.

Each district with ELL students should have a plan for identifying and serving these students that meet the requirements of Nebraska's Rule 15: *Regulations and Procedures for the Education of Students with Limited English Proficiency in Public Schools*. Under Rule 15, each school district shall ensure that all LEP students participate in the assessments required by Section 005 of 92 NAC 10. Each school district shall provide accommodations for LEP students participating in the assessments (Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 15, Section 006.01).

Professional Development and Support for Implementation:

The Nebraska Department of Education will partner with its test development vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), to develop and release NeSA-ELA item and scoring samplers, online training tools, practice tests, and guided practice tests for each grade to be tested to support teachers and administrators as they prepare students for the 2016 field test and 2017 fully transitioned test. These will be available on the NDE website.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

- 2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

The Nebraska Department of Education embraces the importance of differentiated recognition, accountability and support for school districts. It is Nebraska's vision to provide the opportunity for learning, earning and living for all, therefore building a robust accountability system in AQuESTT is vital. AQuESTT's systematic approach to differentiated recognition and support, to both identify schools in need of support and schools successfully building capacity, focuses accountability on continuous improvement.

Nebraska's Accountability Context:

In 2012, the Nebraska State Legislature outlined an initial blueprint for accountability that included measurements for school buildings and districts that would include graduation rates, growth and improvement on state assessments along with other indicators established by the State Board of Education (Nebraska Revised Statute Section 79-760.06.01). NDE developed an initial accountability system; and in August 2012, the State Board of Education adopted the Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS), which is based on student scale scores within grades, buildings and districts. The system is intended to inform educators, parents, school board members, community members and policymakers about the learning progress of Nebraska schools and school districts.

The Nebraska State Legislature passed LB438 (now Nebraska Revised Statute Sections 79-760.06 and .07) on April 10, 2014, amending the State's Quality Education and Accountability Act to include a new way to use statewide assessment data from the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) system. According to state statute, performance indicators including "graduation rates, student growth and student improvement on the assessment instruments and other indicators of the performance of public schools and school districts as established by the state board" (79-760.06.01) will be combined into a single measure that will be used to place schools in one of four classification categories:

Excellent	Great	Good	Needs Improvement
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In January 2014, in response to pending legislation, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) gathered a NePAS Task Force comprised of superintendents, district assessment contacts, school principals, teachers, program directors, Educational Service Unit representatives, policy partners, and NDE personnel to work on an accountability model. The task force included representation from schools and districts with varying size, student population, and geographic location in the state. National assessment experts including Chad Buckendahl from Alpine Testing Solutions, Bill Auty from Education Measurement, and Brian Gong from the National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment supported the group as they drafted an initial classification system. The group designed a system that would combine multiple indicators into a single measure for each school building and district, set goals, assign a classification for each building and district, set consequences for the lowest performing school buildings, and recognize high-performing schools. They met in a series of four in-person meetings in Lincoln, NE, February 24-25; March 20-21; April 16-17; and July 23-24, 2014.

The NePAS Taskforce began by developing guiding principles for a new Nebraska accountability model. A system that would:

- Improve outcomes for all students
- Effectively identify student and schools that need to improve student learning
- Valid and reliable
- Fair
- Equitable for the range of sizes and distribution of demographics in Nebraska schools
- Easy to understand and explain
- Meets Nebraska's needs

From there, the group looked at other state accountability models and classification levels. They considered US Department of Education's ESEA Flexibility guidance regarding accountability models, reduction of achievement gaps, and goals of 100% proficiency by 2020. The group proposed 20 different potential models. The task force then narrowed 20 potential models to two final models under consideration. Both of these were based on the Dominant Profile Judgment Method (Plake, Hambleton, & Jaeger, 1997). Dr. Auty ran impact data for with the previous year's data for these two models and the task force ultimately recommended a model for classification of schools and districts.

This initial accountability draft with its classification component (NePas 1.1) has become a part of a broader system of accountability of support in Nebraska's **AQuESTT (A Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow)**. AQuESTT, a next generation accountability system for Nebraska public schools and districts, is designed to support college and career readiness for all students by integrating the components of accountability, assessment, accreditation, career education, and the effective use of data into a system of school improvement and support that is imperative for the good of Nebraska students and for the state to have a vibrant and economically successful future

AQuESTT aligns with the processes of state accreditation of school districts and serves as a blueprint for continuous improvement for each school and school district in Nebraska. With a vision to improve teaching and learning and student success and access in all Nebraska public schools and districts AQuESTT is built upon the following tenets: College and Career Readiness; Assessment; Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success; Educator Effectiveness; Transitions; and Educational Opportunities and Access

AQuESTT Goals

- 1) Ensure all students are college and career ready upon high school graduation
- 2) Ensure all educators are effective in preparing all students to be college and career ready
- 3) Empower stakeholders to take action in the support of success for all students
- 4) Continuously empower and innovate for higher levels of achievement

AQuESTT Components

- 1) Performance objectives for schools and districts
- 2) Measures and metrics
- 3) Annual determinations and reporting of performance of schools and districts
- 4) Classification of school and district performance
- 5) Designation of priority, focus, and reward schools
- 6) Rewards, consequences and supports for schools and districts
- 7) Statewide professional learning support for schools and districts
- 8) Evaluation and review for continuous improvement

AQuESTT Measures and Metrics

AQuESTT relies on the measurement, collection and analysis of a variety of indicators used to classify the performance of public schools and districts. These indicators include status, growth, and improvement as measured by student performance on the NeSA assessments in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Writing. Average scale scores on these assessments is the metric used to calculate status.

Student growth is measured as the difference between the same students' average scale scores from one year to the next. Improvement is measured as the difference between the average scale score of different groups of students in a grade from one year to the next.

Additional indicators that factor into the overall performance score of schools and districts include participation rate in the state assessments and graduation rates.

Subgroup performance is determined through the use of a super group designation. In order to avoid individual student scores being counted multiple times, students scoring below proficient will comprise a super group for this process.

Annual Determinations and Reporting of Performance of Schools and Districts

AQuESTT uses the measures previously discussed (i.e. status, improvement, student growth and participation on state assessments and graduation rates) to annually characterize and differentiate between schools and districts as Excellent (High Performing), Great Exceeds Expectations), Good (Meets Expectations), or Needs Improvement (Needs Improvement).

Annual, clear and accurate reporting of the performance of public schools and districts ensures that stakeholders – students, families, educators, policymakers and the public – receive information that can be “used to identify and replicate best practices, recognize and correct deficiencies, continuously improve performance” (CCSSO, 2012).

AQuESTT relies on the annual reporting of school and district performance primarily through Nebraska’s State of the Schools Report (SOSR) website (<http://www.education.ne.gov/documents/SOSR.html>) and through direct reports to schools and districts of student, school and district performance prior to the public release of performance results. These reports and website displays provide state assessment results for all students and disaggregated student subgroups, as well as other data relevant to student achievement. The SOSR website provides reports of student performance on national norm referenced assessments required for reporting purposes, school and district profiles that provide a context for better understanding the performance results, information related to career education programs and career education performance, and teacher qualifications. The SOSR website also contains a comparison tool, which allows stakeholders to compare the performance of up to seven districts.

Data is presented in the fall of the year for public release but is provided to schools and districts in the summer, prior to the public release, in order to allow educators time to analyze the results and address next steps for continuous improvement.

Classification of School and District Performance

The measures previously described (i.e. NeSA status, growth, improvement, and participation, and graduation rates) are used to initially classify public schools and districts into one of four performance levels:

Excellent	Great	Good	Needs Improvement
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Additional indicators are used in subsequent classification processes for schools in the lowest classification in order to identify priority and focus schools and in the other classification levels to identify reward schools.

Once the initial school and district performance level ratings, based on status, have been determined, compensatory adjustments are applied to the performance level classification for schools as follows:

Step One	Determine performance scores for all students and place each school or district into one of four performance levels (Excellent, Good, Great, and Needs Improvement) based on averaged scale scores from NeSA English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Writing assessments.
Step Two	Make adjustments to the assigned Performance Level according to the following compensatory indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in Elementary, Middle School, and High School: If last year’s Status

	<p>results compared to the previous year's Status results is equal to or greater than XX, increase the classification by one performance level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Growth in Elementary and Middle School:</u> If the percentage of students showing growth is equal to or greater than XX, increase the classification by one performance level. • <u>Graduation Rate in High School:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent. ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent or Great. ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, adjust the final classification to Needs Improvement. • <u>Participation Rate:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the participation rate is at least 90% but less than 95%, decrease classification by one level. ○ If participation rate is less than 90% but at least 85%, decrease the classification by two levels. ○ If participation rate is less than 85%, classification level is Needs Improvement. • <u>Non-Proficient Group:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the current year's percent non-proficient shows a decrease of XX percentage points or more from the previous year, raise the classification by one performance level. ○ If the current year's percent non-proficient shows an increase of XX percentage points or more from the previous year, then lower the classification by one performance level.
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Designation of Priority, Focus, and Reward Schools

Priority Schools

Once the school and district classification process is completed, additional indicators are used to review the performance of schools in the lowest (Needs Improvement) classification for the purpose of identifying priority schools. Nebraska statute (79.760.06 R.S.S.) requires the designation of three (3) priority schools from the lowest performance level classification for the purpose of receiving interventions that diagnose issues negatively affecting student achievement and for receiving support and assistance from the NDE to develop progress plans and strategies designed to improve student achievement. Nebraska defines these priority schools as those in most need of assistance to improve student achievement.

The following additional, measurable indicators will be applied to all schools in the lowest (Needs Improvement) performance classification: all-time best graduation rate, all-time best student performance rate, reduction of achievement gaps, percent of appropriately endorsed staff, Title 1 status, attendance rate, and dropout rate. A diagnostic review of schools in the lowest classification level based on these indicators will result a smaller pool of schools from which to designate the three priority schools:

AQuESTT for Nebraska

AQuESTT: Indicators for Classification Determinations of Schools and Districts

CLASSIFICATION ROUND	POTENTIAL INDICATORS	AQUESTT TENETS	METHODS FOR MAKING DETERMINATIONS
FIRST (For all schools and districts to result in every school and district assigned to a classification level – i.e. excellent, great, good, needs improvement)	NeSA Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status • Improvement • Growth • Participation 	Assessment	Performance Level Descriptors Decision Rules - Compensatory/Conjunctive Cut Scores
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation rate 	College and Career Ready	
SECOND (For schools in the lowest performance level classification)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-time best – student performance • Reduction of achievement gaps* 	Assessment	School Profiles (SOSR, Other Data Sources) Title 1 Data Rubrics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-time best – graduation rate • College going rate* 	College and Career Ready	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of appropriately endorsed staff* • Stability of administrators and teachers within school/district* • Qualifications of Staff* 	Educator Effectiveness	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title 1 Status – Eligible/Non-Eligible • Instructional units offered* • Enrichment opportunities (high ability learner, talented and gifted, dual credit, AP, IB)* 	Educational Opportunities and Access	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance rate 	Positive	

		Partnerships, Relationships, Student Success	
	• <u>Dropout rate</u>	Transitions	

*Denotes indicators that may be used in future processes to designate priority schools. Information for these indicators will be obtained through data currently collected by the NDE through the Nebraska Staff and Student Record System (NSSRS).

In order to complete the priority school designation, the following list of additional indicators will be applied in a third round of classification and reviewed for this smaller pool of schools: Implementation of a standards-based curriculum, implementation of a career education program, utilization of a research-based instructional model that is aligned to the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework, formal observation processes for superintendents and building administrators, individual student learning plans, student learning objectives, a safe, healthy and emotionally secure learning environment, engagement with educational service units for support in professional development, special education, media, and technology services, school processes for addressing student mobility, and federal program support:

CLASSIFICATION ROUND	INDICATORS	AQUESTT TENETS	METHODS FOR MAKING DETERMINATIONS
THIRD (For schools in the lowest performance level classification remaining after second round. Results of using these indicators to review the performance of schools in the lowest performance level classification will result in the designation of Priority Schools.)	<i>Standards-aligned Curriculum</i> <i>Career Education*</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participation/Concentration</i> • <i>Standards</i> • <i>Guidance program*</i> 	College and Career Ready	Surveys On-site Interviews Focus Groups
	<i>Utilization of a research-based instructional model/framework</i> <i>Professional development plan*</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teachers</i> • <i>Principals</i> • <i>Superintendents</i> • <i>Local boards</i> <i>Evaluation systems aligned with NE Teacher/Principal Performance Frameworks*</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formal evaluation process for</i> 	Educator Effectiveness	

	<i>supt.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Individual Student Learning Plans</i> • <i>School processes for addressing student mobility</i> 		
	<i>Federal Program Support*</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School Improvement Grant (SIG)</i> • <i>21st Century Learning Grant</i> • <i>Migrant Education Resources</i> • <i>Early Childhood*—Head Start</i> 	Educational Opportunities and Access	
	<i>Student Learning Objectives</i> <i>Physically safe, healthy and emotionally secure learning environment*</i> <i>Engagement with Educational Service Units</i>	Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success	
	<i>School processes for addressing student mobility*</i>	Transitions	

Information related to these indicators will be obtained through school and district improvement plans filed with the NDE, site visits, and interviews. This diagnostic approach in identifying the issues that negatively affect student achievement in the low performing schools will assist the NDE in providing appropriate interventions and systems of support.

Focus Schools

All schools in the lowest (Needs Improvement) performance classification level, excluding the three priority schools will be designated as Focus Schools. Focus schools may or may not be schools eligible for and/or receiving Title 1 funding.

Reward Schools

Schools in the Great (Exceeds Expectations) and Excellent (High Functioning) performance classification levels, may be designated as Reward Schools. Reward schools may or may not be schools eligible for and/or receiving Title 1 funding.

Rewards and Supports for Schools and Districts

Intervention and Support for Priority Schools

As specified in state statute (79.760.07) an intervention team shall be established for each priority school to assist the district in which the priority school is located:

- Diagnosing issues that negatively affect student achievement in the priority school
- Developing measurable indicators of progress
- Designing and implementing strategies to address issues that negatively affect student achievement in the priority school

- Developing a progress plan for approval by the State Board of Education that outlines the measurable indicators of progress, actions, and strategies the school and district will implement in order to improve student achievement
- Developing the criteria by which the school will exit the priority status
- Monitoring the progress of the school in meeting the indicators of progress

An Intervention team for each priority school shall consist of up to five members with educational and professional experience to carry out the responsibilities of the team. Intervention team members may be NDE staff, staff from the school district, which contains the priority school, or outside experts. The NDE will provide training and oversight of the intervention teams.

Any intervention team member will be compensated for work performed in conjunction with work as part of the team and will receive reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses associated with the work of the team.

Support for Focus Schools

All schools in the lowest (Needs Improvement) performance classification level, excluding the three priority schools, will be designated as Focus Schools. The NDE will provide consultation and opportunities for professional development in the continuous school improvement process for teachers and principals to assist them in developing strategies for improving the academic achievement of their students.

Reward Schools

Schools selected from the Great (Exceeds Expectations) and Excellent (High Functioning) performance classification levels, may be designated as Reward Schools. Reward schools will be recognized for outstanding practices that lead to high levels of student achievement, growth, and improvement. The NDE will also provide opportunities (e.g. professional learning conferences and school improvement workshops) for Reward Schools to showcase and share these promising practices with educators from other Nebraska schools.

Statewide Support for Professional Learning for All Educators

AQuESTT supports all public schools and districts in providing statewide opportunities for professional development for teachers and administrators through partnerships and in collaboration with key professional educational organizations (e.g. Educational Service Units, Nebraska Council of School Administrators, Nebraska State Teachers Association, Learning Forward)

An example of this type of collaboration and partnership is an annual statewide conference hosted by the NDE that focuses on the effective use of data for continuous school improvement. Beginning in 2015, the conference will also provide opportunities for schools and district staff to learn more about the AQuESTT system, its relationship to continuous school improvement and the role of data in supporting accountability and school improvement

efforts. This conference will engage the efforts of the NDE, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Learning Forward Nebraska affiliate, and Educational Service Units (ESUs). Through Nebraska’s State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant, the NDE in collaboration with the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC), is implementing a statewide plan for professional development for all public schools in the effective use of data for continuous school improvement.

In addition, AQuESTT supports the efforts of the Nebraska SLDS grant in providing professional development support to schools and districts in the use of the state level data dashboard that will increase the capacity of district, schools, and teachers to analyze and use student data at the classroom level.

AQuESTT also supports schools and districts through a series of annual statewide workshops designed to provide assistance in meeting accreditation requirements through continuous improvement process. These workshops are a collaborative effort between the NDE and AdvancEd.

Evaluation and Review for Continuous Improvement

We are in the process of developing the evaluation and intervention model for AQuESTT.

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

<p>Option A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.</p>	<p>Option B</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.
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If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must:

- a. provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed:
- b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

Nebraska State Accountability: NeSA Scores
Percent Proficient: Meets/Exceeds Combined
Combined Results for All Grades Tested

	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Writing
2009-2010	69 %			
2010-2011	72 %	63 %		
2011-2012	74 %	67 %	67 %	
2012-2013	77 %	69 %	70 %	68 % ^
2013-2014	77 %	71 %	72 %	-- ^^

^ Students at grades 8 and 11 experienced formatting issues with the NeSA-Writing online test administration. While research into the score results does not indicate an effect on student results, it also does not assure there was no effect. Scores should be interpreted with caution and are not included in Nebraska Performance Accountability System [NePAS].

^^ In 2014 students in grades 8 and 11 experienced technology issues with the online test. Valid results are not available for all districts or for the state for NeSA-Writing at grades 8 and 11.

College and Career Ready:

Nebraska is in the process of transitioning its NeSA assessments to align with college and career standards. By 2017-2018 the core academic areas will have fully implemented college and career aligned assessments.

Nebraska's Timeline for Transitioning to College Career Ready Standards and Assessments:

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of ELA College and Career Ready Standards• Initial implementation of NeSA-ELA assessment• Revision of Mathematics standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full implementation of College and Career aligned NeSA-ELA assessment• Approval of College and Career Ready Mathematics standards• Initial implementation of NeSA-M• Revision of Science standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full implementation of College and Career aligned NeSA-Math assessment• Approval of College and Career Ready Science standards• Initial implementation of NeSA-Science assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full implementation of College and Career ready aligned NeSA-Science assessment

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments	Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in	Option C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set
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<p>administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p>the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p>these AMOs.</p> <p>ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.</p> <p>iii. Provide a link to the State’s report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)</p>
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AQuESTT is focused on accountability framed by support. We recognize the importance of developing specific target goals for growth and improvement that address achievement across sub-groups. This begins with an examination of students who are non-proficient and analyzing who these students are within a unique building context. Interventions and supports will be created to address the unique needs within a building. Nebraska is constructing a system of accountability and continuous improvement in AQuESTT.

Process: Individual school buildings will develop customized AMOs based on their NeSA trend data.

We are still in the process of developing a methodology for AMOs; we seek your feedback.

Annual measurable outcomes are an opportunity for our state to empower districts to set and monitor their own outcomes. This process while not complete, seeks to provide guidance for districts down to the school level building by supporting districts to:

1. Examine non-proficient trends across NeSA assessments
2. Examine building sub-group performance
3. Set an AMO goal that decreases the % of non-proficient
4. Accountability based on improvement and recognition for All Time Bests

This particular section of the waiver is important to gather information from school districts and stakeholders across the state. If schools will be asked to set AMOs we feel the creation of the process they will be held accountable to should be in their hands to help construct.

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Reward schools will be selected from the Title I schools in the “Excellent” performance level determined in Nebraska’s annual AQuESTT classification. This determination is based on the following:

Step One	Determine performance scores for all students and place each school or district into one of four performance levels (Excellent, Good, Great, and Needs Improvement) based on averaged scale scores from NeSA English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Writing assessments.
Step Two	<p>Make adjustments to the assigned Performance Level according to the following compensatory indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Improvement in Elementary, Middle School, and High School:</u> If last year’s Status results compared to the previous year’s Status results is equal to or greater than XX, increase the classification by one performance level. • <u>Growth in Elementary and Middle School:</u> If the percentage of students showing growth is equal to or greater than XX, increase the classification by one performance level. • <u>Graduation Rate in High School:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent. ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent or Great. ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, adjust the final classification to Needs Improvement. • <u>Participation Rate:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the participation rate is at least 90% but less than 95%, decrease classification by one level. ○ If participation rate is less than 90% but at least 85%, decrease the classification by two levels. ○ If participation rate is less than 85%, classification level is Needs Improvement. • <u>Non-Proficient Group:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the current year’s percent non-proficient shows a decrease of XX percentage points or more from the previous year, raise the classification by one performance level. ○ If the current year’s percent non-proficient shows an increase of XX

	percentage points or more from the previous year, then lower the classification by one performance level.
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Classification across four performance levels (Excellent, Great, Good, Needs Improvement) will be determined for all schools in the state. Title I schools will be identified from among those schools in each of the four performance levels.

Distinguished Contributor:

1. Title I school classified as a “Reward School” **that**
2. Participates in process/program evaluation to leverage broader impacts of their work to help build infrastructure, benefit society for community outreach, and to integrate research and training (National Science Foundation *Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Broadening Participation Projects*) **AND/OR**
3. Presents at CIP or Nebraska Education Conference **AND/OR**
4. Provides mentorship and leadership support to another school or district.

Reward Schools:

1. A Title I School designated as “Excellent” in the AQuESTT Annual Classification **OR**
 2. A Title I School designated as “Great” that is significantly closing achievement gaps.
- 2.C.ii Provide the SEA’s list of reward schools in Table 2.
- 2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

Distinguished Contributor:

- A press release issued that lists both High-Performance and High-Progress Schools
- Each Reward School will receive a Targeted Communication Toolkit that for a range of stakeholders.
- Reward Schools will be recognized at Statewide Conferences, including regional Continuous Improvement Workshops as well as the Nebraska Education Convention annual meeting.
- Reward Schools will be asked to present at statewide conferences to provide best practices and system process professional learning opportunities for other districts.
- Collaborate with ESUs to support other school districts in the state, sharing best practices and processes for continuous improvement.

Reward Schools (either High Performance or High Progress):

- A press release issued that lists both High-Performance and High-Progress Schools
- Each Reward School will receive a Targeted Communication Toolkit that for a range of stakeholders.
- Reward Schools will be recognized at Statewide Conferences, including regional Continuous Improvement Workshops as well as the Nebraska Education Convention annual meeting.
- Recognition at statewide conferences.

2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State’s Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Priority schools will be selected from the Title I schools in the “Needs Improvement” performance level determined in Nebraska’s annual AQuESTT classification. This determination is based on the following:

Step One	Determine performance scores for all students and place each school or district into one of four performance levels (Excellent, Good, Great, and Needs Improvement) based on averaged scale scores from NeSA English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Writing assessments.
Step Two	<p>Make adjustments to the assigned Performance Level according to the following compensatory indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Improvement in Elementary, Middle School, and High School:</u> If last year’s Status results compared to the previous year’s Status results is equal to or greater than XX NEED TO KNOW THE CUT SCORES, increase the classification by one performance level.• <u>Growth in Elementary and Middle School:</u> If the percentage of students showing growth is equal to or greater than XX, increase the classification by one performance level.• <u>Graduation Rate in High School:</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent.○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent or Great.○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, adjust the final

	<p>classification to Needs Improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Participation Rate:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the participation rate is at least 90% but less than 95%, decrease classification by one level. ○ If participation rate is less than 90% but at least 85%, decrease the classification by two levels. ○ If participation rate is less than 85%, classification level is Needs Improvement. • <u>Non-Proficient Group:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the current year's percent non-proficient shows a decrease of XX percentage points or more from the previous year, raise the classification by one performance level. ○ If the current year's percent non-proficient shows an increase of XX percentage points or more from the previous year, then lower the classification by one performance level.
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Classification across four performance levels (Excellent, Great, Good, Needs Improvement) will be determined for all schools in the state. Title I schools will be identified from among those schools in each of the four performance levels.

Category of Priority Schools	Number of Schools
Total number of Title I Schools in Nebraska	
Total number of Priority Schools to be identified	
Total number of schools on list generated based on overall AQuESTT rating that are currently-served Tier I or Tier II SIG schools	
Total number of schools on list generated based on overall AQuESTT rating that are among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools	

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

These are examples of meaningful interventions that may be included. These are being developed within the AQuESTT model.

Each Priority School will develop a Progress Plan that will become their continuous improvement plan. They will choose an intervention strategy:

- Adoption of the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Evaluation Model which will include both Student Learning Objectives focused on improving instruction as well as individualized Professional Development Plans targeted toward an administrator's or teacher's identified areas for growth.
- A redesigned school calendar to provide more time for professional development, collaboration, and evaluation of programs and processes.
 - Professional Development supported by regional Educational Service Units that facilitates
 - Educator's individualized Professional Development Plans.
 - Continuous Improvement goals
 - The use of data to inform instruction
 - Collaboration
 - Professional Learning Communities focused on continuous improvement goals (DeFour & Fullan, 2013)
 - Evaluation of programs and processes supported the Nebraska Department of Education and regional Educational Service Units

Progress Plans will be supported by the:

- Intervention Support Team:
 - Priority Schools will use the ASSIST Tool and the Goal-Builder from AdvancED.
 - NDE, ESU, outside district representative to support the development and implementation of their Progress Plan that would become the school's continuous improvement plan.
- The School Safety coordinator

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

- 2015-2016 school year pilot the intervention process with the three priority schools designated by Nebraska Revised Statute (Section 79-760-06-07).
- 2016-2017 school year Intervention process will expand to more intervention teams and support all schools that are included in the AQuESTT "Needs Improvement" classification that would include the Priority Schools as defined by the Flexibility Request.

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

- Exit the "Needs Improvement" designation in the annual AQuESTT classification system AND
- There is sustainability of the selected intervention as documented and evaluated by the continuous improvement plan.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as “focus schools.” If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

A Focus School will be identified as a Title I School (up to 10% of Title I schools in Nebraska) in either the “Needs Improvement” or “Good” classification. Classifications are determined according to the following steps:

Step One	Determine performance scores for all students and place each school or district into one of four performance levels (Excellent, Good, Great, and Needs Improvement) based on averaged scale scores from NeSA English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Writing assessments.
Step Two	<p>Make adjustments to the assigned Performance Level according to the following compensatory indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Improvement in Elementary, Middle School, and High School:</u> If last year’s Status results compared to the previous year’s Status results is equal to or greater than XX, increase the classification by one performance level. • <u>Growth in Elementary and Middle School:</u> If the percentage of students showing growth is equal to or greater than XX, increase the classification by one performance level. • <u>Graduation Rate in High School:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent. ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, the final classification cannot be Excellent or Great. ○ If the graduation rate is equal to or less than XX%, adjust the final classification to Needs Improvement. • <u>Participation Rate:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the participation rate is at least 90% but less than 95%, decrease classification by one level. ○ If participation rate is less than 90% but at least 85%, decrease the classification by two levels. ○ If participation rate is less than 85%, classification level is Needs Improvement. • <u>Non-Proficient Group:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the current year’s percent non-proficient shows a decrease of XX percentage points or more from the previous year, raise the classification by one performance level. ○ If the current year’s percent non-proficient shows an increase of XX percentage points or more from the previous year, then lower the

	classification by one performance level.
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Classification across four performance levels (Excellent, Great, Good, Needs Improvement) will be determined for all schools in the state. Title I schools will be identified from among those schools in each of the four performance levels.

Category of Focus Schools	Numbers
Total number of Title I schools in Nebraska	
Total number of schools required to be identified as Focus Schools	
Total number of schools on the list generated based on overall rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Good” that have the greatest within-school gaps	
Total number of schools on the list generated based on overall rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Good” that have the greatest within-school gaps	

2.E.ii Provide the SEA’s list of focus schools in Table 2.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA’s focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

- Any Focus School that also has a designation as a Priority School will already have a Progress Plan and the support of an intervention team.
- Any Focus School that is not a Priority School will have access to the following supports:
 - ESU facilitated professional learning related to researched based best practices in relationship to instruction and achievement for targeted sub-groups
 - ESU support in implementing the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Evaluation Model.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

This will continue to be developed as AQuESTT’s model outlines strategies and plans for addressing achievement gaps.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

LEA Name	School Name	School NCES ID #	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
<i>Ex. Washington</i>	<i>Oak HS</i>	<i>111111100001</i>		<i>C</i>	
	<i>Maple ES</i>	<i>111111100002</i>			<i>H</i>
<i>Adams</i>	<i>Willow MS</i>	<i>222222200001</i>	<i>A</i>		
	<i>Cedar HS</i>	<i>222222200002</i>			<i>F</i>
	<i>Elm HS</i>	<i>222222200003</i>			<i>G</i>
TOTAL # of Schools:					

Total # of Title I schools in the State: _____

Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: _____

Key	
Reward School Criteria: A. Highest-performing school B. High-progress school Priority School Criteria: C. Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the “all students” group D-1. Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years D-2. Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years E. Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model	Focus School Criteria: F. Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate G. Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate H. A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school

2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

- 2.F Describe how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA’s new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

AQuESTT is a system of continuous improvement and accountability. If Nebraska is going to have a unified, statewide education system then interventions in the highest-need schools must take local systems, processes and policy into consideration. AQuESTT provides a way to move ideas across a statewide system, targeting support where it is most needed and sharing excess capacity so that all Nebraska students benefit.

- **Professional Learning: (TEACHING and LEARNING)**
 - Ongoing for teachers, administrators, and governing boards
 - Aligned with the school’s instructional framework.
 - Opportunities focused on implementing effective strategies to address the unique needs of students with disabilities and students for whom English is not their first language.
- **Curriculum and Assessment:**
 - Curriculum reviews to ensure that it is implemented with fidelity, having impact on student achievement, and a process in place to modify it when needed.
 - Implement a school wide RTI model
 - Increasing rigor and access to college-level coursework
- **Instruction:**
 - that integrates technology as a part of instructional program
- **Systems of Support**
 - **Use of Data:**
 - to identify and implement curriculum that is vertically aligned and aligned to state standards.
 - to promote continuous use of student data from formative and summative assessments to inform and differentiate instruction.
 - **Evaluation**
 - Rigorous, transparent, equitable evaluation of teachers and principals
 - Of professional learning opportunities, including a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from PD
- **Collaboration**

2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

- 2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:
- i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
 - ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
 - iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

This section is being developed as AQuESTT and its intervention and support strategies continue to be refined. We welcome feedback in this process.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

<p>Option A</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the SEA’s plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year; ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14). 	<p>Option B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.
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In November of 2011, the State Board of Education adopted the *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework*. The Framework identifies a set of effective practices that characterize Nebraska’s best teachers and principals.

In January 2011, the Nebraska State Board of Education authorized the drafting of possible performance standards for teachers and principals. This process began with the formation of a forty-member committee drawn from thirteen of the state’s educational stakeholder groups representing teachers, principals, higher education representatives, school board members, and parents. The purpose of this committee was to prepare a set of draft performance practices for consideration by the State Board.

The committee’s development of Effective Practices and Example Indicators was informed by the profession’s national standards. For teachers, these include the 2010 Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards and the Framework for Teaching

developed by Charlotte Danielson. For principals, these include the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 policy standards. In addition, standards developed by other states served as a valuable resource.

The purpose of the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework is to define effective practices in order to improve teaching and learning. The Practices address the roles of teachers and principals, defined as those educators whose primary task is working directly with students in a school setting. Local districts may wish to create Effective Practices for educational specialists not covered by the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework.

Developing the Performance Framework. Following the structure of Nebraska’s curriculum standards, the *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework* is organized into two elements: a broad Effective Practice statement followed by several Example Indicators. The Indicators are designed to be examples that clarify and develop the Effective Practices; they are not an exhaustive list and can be enhanced by local districts as they use the Framework.

The Framework is designed to encompass a broad range of effective practices that characterize our state’s best teachers and principals. In addition, embedded throughout the Framework are four essential themes: high expectations for student learning, a commitment to teacher and principal accountability for results, awareness of the individual circumstances of each student in light of the increasing diversity of our state’s population, and the integration of technology.

The *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework* is intended to be a useful resource that provides a definition of effective practice to voluntarily guide local districts, institutions of higher education, and state and local policymakers as we strive together to ensure Nebraska’s continuing commitment to improve educational achievement for all students.

In February 2012, the State Board of Education approved the development of models for teacher and principal evaluations based on *The Teacher and Principal Performance Framework*. Teachers and principals will be evaluated on the Effective Practices outlined in the *Teacher and Principal Performance Framework*.

Nebraska's Performance Framework for Teachers**The Effective Practices:****1. Foundational Knowledge**

The teacher demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards needed to provide each student with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators**The Teacher:**

- Possesses a strong command of the content and related instructional strategies in the discipline(s) he or she teaches.
- Understands research-based instructional approaches, strategies, assessments, and interventions.
- Understands the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of students, how they learn, and how they differ.
- Understands the effect of cultural and societal influences on learning for each student.
- Understands how national, state, and local standards impact teaching.
- Understands the components of an effective curriculum.
- Accepts responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

2. Planning and Preparation

The teacher integrates knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards with the established curriculum to set high expectations and develop rigorous instruction for each student that supports the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators**The Teacher:**

- Develops coherent units, lessons, and activities that reflect high expectations and enable each student to achieve standards, learning goals, and instructional objectives.
- Designs and adapts lessons based on student progress, assessment results, and interests.
- Uses a variety of appropriate, research-based teaching strategies.
- Considers students' prior knowledge, abilities, and individual circumstances to ensure that instruction is differentiated, relevant to students, and rigorous.
- Integrates a variety of resources, including technology, to provide challenging, motivating, and engaging learning experiences.

(3) The Learning Environment

The teacher creates and maintains a learning environment that fosters positive relationships and promotes active student engagement in learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators

The Teacher:

- Establishes relationships that result in a positive learning climate of openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry, and interacts with students in ways that demonstrate and promote recognition of diversity.
- Ensures a safe and accessible environment.
- Establishes, communicates, and maintains effective routines, procedures, and clear standards of conduct.
- Establishes a collaborative learning community built on trust and teamwork that is consistent with and supportive of the full development of students as individuals.
- Establishes high expectations that cultivate each learner's self-motivation and encourage pride in his/her genuine accomplishments.
- Values individual students, their families, neighborhoods, and communities; acknowledges their experiences and builds upon those experiences to increase academic success.

(4) Instructional Strategies

The teacher uses effective instructional strategies to ensure growth in student achievement.

The Teacher:

- Uses a range of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and resources that are targeted to meet learning goals.
- Modifies, adapts, and differentiates instruction and accommodations based on data analysis, observation, and student needs.
- Communicates effectively with students to promote and support high expectations for achievement.
- Assumes various roles in the instructional process appropriate to the content, purposes of instruction, and the needs of students.
- Engages students by using varied activities, assignments, groupings, structure, pacing, and a variety of instructional techniques such as direct instruction, inquiry, questioning, and discussion as appropriate for individual student achievement.
- Uses strategies that enable students to develop skills in critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving.
- Uses existing and emerging technologies as needed to support and promote student learning.
- Implements engaging learning experiences that draw upon family and community resources.

(5) Assessment

The teacher systematically uses multiple methods of formative and summative assessment to measure student progress and to inform ongoing planning, instruction, and reporting.

Example Indicators

The Teacher:

- Develops and uses varied and appropriate assessments and accommodations based on instructional objectives and student needs.
- Uses both formative and summative assessments and the resulting data to inform instruction, monitor student progress over time, and provide meaningful feedback to each student.
- Seeks to assure that classroom-based assessment instruments and procedures are effective, free of bias, and appropriate to the developmental and linguistic capabilities of students.
- Develops or selects appropriate assessments and interprets the resulting data, both individually and with colleagues.
- Uses strategies that enable students to set high expectations for personal achievement, and to assess, monitor, and reflect on their own work.
- Compiles and reports assessment data to accurately document student progress over time.

(6) Professionalism

The teacher acts as an ethical and responsible member of the professional community.

Example Indicators

The Teacher:

- Systematically reflects on his/her own professional practice in order to bring about continuous improvement.
- Actively pursues meaningful professional development.
- Contributes to and advocates for the profession.
- Protects the established rights and confidentiality of students and families.
- Adheres to school policies, procedures, and regulations.
- Models ethical behavior in accordance with established standards.
- Maintains accurate records, documentation, and data.

(7) Vision and Collaboration

The teacher contributes to and promotes the vision of the school and collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators

The Teacher:

- Actively participates in the development and implementation of the school's vision, mission, and goals for teaching and learning.
- Contributes to the continuous school improvement process.
- Establishes and maintains collaborative professional relationships.
- Uses effective communication strategies and technological resources when appropriate, and takes into account various factors that impact communication with individual students, their families, and the community.
- Collaborates with students, parents, families, and the community to create meaningful relationships that enhance the learning process.

Nebraska's Performance Framework for Principals

The Effective Practices:

(1) Vision for Learning

The principal establishes and communicates a vision for teaching and learning that results in improved student achievement.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Uses varied sources of information and analyzes multiple sources of data about current practices and outcomes to shape the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Engages constituent groups within the school community to develop commitment to the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Aligns the school's vision, mission, and goals to district, state, and federal policies.
- Communicates the vision in order to establish high expectations for student performance.
- Leads a systematic review of the vision, mission, and goals and revises as appropriate.

(2) Continuous School Improvement

The principal leads a continuous school improvement process that results in improved student performance and school effectiveness.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Develops and implements, in collaboration with the school community, a school improvement plan that is aligned with district, state, and federal guidelines and goals.
- Maintains comprehensive and current information about students, academic achievement, school effectiveness, and the school community.
- Makes informed decisions based on student achievement data, research, and best practices to improve teaching and learning.
- Uses technology to increase school efficiency and effectiveness.
- Revises the school improvement plan based on a systematic review of progress toward its goals.
- Uses the continuous improvement plan to guide professional development within the school community.

(3) Instructional Leadership

The principal provides leadership to ensure the implementation of a rigorous curriculum, the use of effective teaching practices, and accountability for results.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Promotes teaching practices based on sound instructional theory and professional collaboration to meet the learning needs of all students.
- Ensures that the instructional program is aligned with content standards, includes effective instructional and assessment practices, and protects instructional time to maximize learning.
- Supports the selection of instructional content that maximizes individual student learning and provides appropriate multiple perspectives.
- Uses student performance data from multiple assessments to evaluate the curriculum and instructional program.
- Assumes responsibility for the continued improvement of student learning within the school and holds staff accountable for the growth of student achievement across the curriculum.

(4) Culture for Learning

The principal creates a school culture that enhances the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of all students.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Provides full and equitable access to curricular and extra-curricular programs that address the needs, interests, and abilities of all students.
- Develops a culture of high expectations for self, students, and staff.
- Fosters an environment of respect and rapport based on clear guidelines for appropriate behavior.
- Uses multiple indicators of student performance to encourage the development of the whole child in a manner consistent with academic achievement.
- Identifies barriers to student learning and development, and devises strategies to reduce or eliminate them.
- Maintains a high level of visibility within the school community, and recognizes the accomplishments of students and staff.
- Leads an ongoing assessment of the school climate and culture.

(5) Systems Management

The principal manages the organization, operations, and resources of the school to provide a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment for all students and staff.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Allocates financial, material, and human resources to support the educational program.
- Monitors the school's site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe and orderly environment.
- Identifies and resolves problems, manages conflict, and builds consensus to achieve the efficient operation of the school.
- Communicates with community agencies to provide a safe school environment.
- Develops procedures for the effective use of technology among staff, students, and the school community.
- Understands school law and its impact on staff, students, and families, and complies with local, state, and federal mandates.
- Guides and influences policymakers as they develop regulations, policies, and laws that impact the school.

(6) Staff Leadership

The principal uses effective personnel practices to select, develop, support, and lead high quality teachers and non-teaching staff.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Recruits, hires, develops, and retains high quality professional and support staff to realize the school's vision.
- Develops and supports an effective learning environment for teachers and other staff.
- Mentors emerging staff leaders in order to build leadership capacity within the school community.
- Supervises the school's staff members and holds them accountable for results based on high expectations and professional standards.
- Implements a performance evaluation system and a professional development program for teachers and instructional support staff based on a common instructional language and effective teaching practices.
- Models continuous learning and provides professional development opportunities for all staff.

(7) Developing Relationships

The principal promotes and supports productive relationships with students, staff, families, and the community.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Builds relationships that support the school and its vision.
- Develops an understanding of the community's cultural, social, and intellectual resources among students and staff, and makes use of those resources to strengthen the school.
- Encourages active family and community participation in the learning process to enhance student achievement.
- Strengthens the educational program by soliciting information from families and community members.
- Uses effective public information strategies.
- Creates strategic partnerships with business, religious, political, and other community leaders in order to carry out the school's mission.
- Strives to develop understanding and respect for others among students and staff.

(8) Professional Ethics and Advocacy

The principal acts with fairness, integrity, and a high level of professional ethics, and advocates for policies of equity and excellence in support of the vision of the school.

Example Indicators

The Principal:

- Treats others with dignity and respect.
- Protects the established rights and confidentiality of students and staff.
- Seeks to make decisions that are just, fair, and equitable.
- Models and articulates reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior in accordance with established standards.
- Holds others in the school community accountable for demonstrating integrity and ethical behavior.
- Advocates for public policies that ensure appropriate and equitable resources for the education system.
- Responds to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural environment in which the school exists.

Teacher & Principal Evaluation

Process for Developing the Evaluation Framework:

In January 2010, a leadership committee, representing all facets of Nebraska education, met for several months and made recommendations on specific components and processes to be included in such models.

In February 2012, the State Board of Education approved the development of models for teacher and principal evaluations based on *The Teacher and Principal Performance Framework*. Teachers and principals will be evaluated on the Effective Practices outlined in the *Teacher and Principal Performance Framework*.

In the spring of 2013, seventeen pilot schools, representing all sizes of schools and all regions of the state, began a two-year process of designing and testing the models. Nebraska's Rule 10: *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools* requires that teachers be evaluated on instructional performance, classroom organization and management, and personal and professional conduct (Section 007.06). Pilot schools began by developing a common language and framework for instruction. Schools selected either Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* or Robert Marzano's *Causal Evaluation Model* as framework for the pilot.

Evaluative Criteria:**Teacher Evaluation Criteria:**

The seven Effective Practices in the Nebraska Teacher Performance Framework form the basis for evaluation of all teacher practice. Teachers will be evaluated in one of four performance levels (Exemplary, Proficient, Proficient, Basic, Unsatisfactory) using a set of rubrics that outline example behaviors and sources of evidence. The teacher-evaluation model includes the following evaluative criteria:

Classroom Practices:	Classroom Practices will be evaluated based on a common Instructional framework. A school's selected framework will form the basis of classroom observation, reflection, and discussion throughout the formative evaluation period for teachers.
Student Achievement:	<p>The Leadership Committee recommended that Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) be used in the Nebraska Teacher/Principal Evaluation Model as a way to assess teachers' impact on student achievement. The Nebraska Department of Education in collaboration with Staff Developers from the state's regional Educational Service Units provides training and continued professional learning around Student Learning Objectives.</p> <p>SLOs are collaboratively developed with staff developer or principal and teacher and can be measured by the use of a variety of assessments, not just the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessments or standardized tests. This collaboration should include a joint review of baseline data and content needs. In this process, educators work together to determine content priorities, create student-learning goals, set challenging yet achievable targets, and identify appropriate means of assessment.</p> <p>Unlike NeSA, which includes only tested grades, SLOs can be used to evaluate all educators on the specific content they teach. SLOs allow for educators to be held accountable for the academic content for which they are responsible and can be designed for any subject in any size of school. In addition, SLOs are an effective instructional practice that involves aligning goals with standards, setting achievable objectives, and using high quality assessments to measure students' performance. ADD CITATIONS (SUCH AS LACHLAN ET AL) TO SUPPORT THE USE OF SLOs</p> <p><i>Key Features of SLOs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear identification of the student population and curriculum • A specific interval of instruction, often with a pre and post assessment • Rigorous yet realistic targets for student achievement • Defined strategies for achieving growth objectives • Appropriate assessments to measure student results

Three Steps in Developing SLOs:

Step 1: Analyzing the Student Population: SLOs are based on the unique population of individual classes. This requires gathering information about conditions that may affect learning, such as English language proficiency or learning disabilities. Teachers assess curriculum needs through a review of past student performance or pre-testing.

Step 2: Determining Priority Content: SLOs focus on the essential content in a course. Teachers and principals analyze the year’s curriculum to determine the most critical learning aligned with Nebraska State Standards. Content priorities are aligned between across grade levels and subjects. Ideally, all teachers of the same grade level or subject within a school would collaborate on the same SLOs, although the targets may vary depending on student needs and baseline data.

Step 3: Gather Baseline Data: Baseline data describes students’ current knowledge in relation to overall grade level or course objectives. To the extent feasible, it is based on the actual student population to be taught and pre-testing may be necessary to gather that information. In some cases, the subject matter to be taught is so new to students that there is little baseline data available. Baseline data forms the basis for differentiated targets for learning objectives.

Step 4: Develop the Learning Objective or Goal: The learning objective states in specific and measurable terms what the teacher wants the students to achieve by the end of the instructional time period. NDE provides a template for educators to use while framing their SLO.

Step 5: Determine Differentiated Targets: Targets define in very specific terms how each student or group of students are expected to perform with regard to the SLO at the end of the instructional time period. Targets are outlined in terms of expected growth rates for a student or group of students. Targets are differentiated in order to ensure that instruction meets the varied needs of all students in a teacher’s classroom. Target statements focus on growth toward mastery for all students and are set to reduce the gap between students’ current and expected performance.

Step 6: Determine the Learning Interval: SLOs are created to be met over the course of an academic year. Sub-objectives or targets may be included as benchmarks throughout the year.

Step 7: Determine Instructional Strategies: Learning strategies are collaboratively developed by teachers and principals that are developmentally appropriate for all students, appropriate to the subject matter, differentiated for students with a variety of learning needs, and include both whole class and strategies and interventions for individual students.

Step 8: Select Appropriate Assessments: Educators consider appropriate

	<p>assessments throughout the SLO development process. Assessments must be rigorous and comparable across classrooms. The following assessments have been used as examples of appropriate assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessments in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, or Writing • NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments • Non-test assessments such as projects, portfolios, products, or performances (Laura Goe) that are developed along with a rubric that measures performance.
Professional Development:	<p>The most important aspects of AQuESTT are professional learning and continuous improvement. It is with this focus that Nebraska's Teacher and Principal Evaluation Model specifies an individualized professional learning plan for every teacher, educational specialist, principal and other school and district administrators participating in the evaluation model.</p>
Individual Plan:	<p>Each year educators develop one or more professional goal in collaboration with an evaluator. These are input into a template that outlines the goal, strategies to achieve each goal, and a means for measuring success. These goals are developed based on the educator's most recent summative evaluation. These are reviewed and used in the evaluation rubric that will go into the educator's next summative evaluation. The educator will receive an annual rating on the implementation and attainment of the Professional Development Plan.</p> <p><u>Steps for Developing an Individual Professional Development Plan:</u></p> <p><u>Step 1:</u> An evaluator and educator collaborate to identify growth areas from the educator's last summative evaluation.</p> <p><u>Step 2:</u> The evaluator and educator collaborate to develop at least one professional development goal that is specific and realistic.</p> <p><u>Step 3:</u> The evaluator and educator develop strategies designed to help the educator attain the goal. Professional development activities can range from independent study, to participating in professional learning communities, to preparing for conducting leadership activities at the school or district level. The identified strategies align clearly with the educator's professional learning goal.</p> <p><u>Step 4:</u> Together, the evaluator and educator identify the resources and assistance necessary for the implementation of the Individual Professional Development Plan.</p> <p><u>Step 5:</u> The evaluator and educator will outline the specific measures of</p>

	<p>success that will be included in the plan.</p> <p><u>Step 6:</u> Implementation of the plan with timelines and benchmarks. Brief conferences between evaluator and educator take place at the beginning of the school year and the mid-year point before an end-of-year formative or summative evaluation conference, depending on the educator's evaluation cycle.</p>
Local Standards (Optional):	Schools may choose to include additional local standards. Teachers who are evaluated on local standards will receive a met/not met rating rather than being assigned one of the four performance levels in the Nebraska Teacher Evaluation Model.
Overall Performance:	Evaluators assign an overall performance rating based on the evaluative criteria outlined in evaluation rubrics. This is not a mathematical determination and evaluative criteria are not weighted. Ratings for teachers come from a holistic evaluation process.

Teacher Evaluation Process:

Evaluation of all teachers is based on direct observation of the educator performing his or her duties and multiple observations throughout the year including formal, informal, and walkthrough observations. The summative evaluation will also include analysis of artifacts and data. If deficiencies are noted in any any observation the evaluator is to provide a list of areas for improvement and a list of suggestions to support the teacher's growth as well as construct a plan for follow-up evaluations and assistance. Probationary teachers (in their first three years in a district) are on an annual evaluation cycle and permanent (tenured) teachers are on a three year-cycle.

Formal Observations:	<p>Formal observations include (1) advance notice to the educator of the time and date of the observation; (2) a pre-observation conference with the observer; (3) observation for a full instructional period in the case of probationary employees and for a duration determined by the observer; (4) a post-observation conference with the observer, and (5) a written report summarizing the strengths and suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Teachers who are in their probationary period (first three years in the district) are required to have at least one formal observation each semester. Permanent, tenured teachers, according to model Board policy calls for at least one formal observation during the summative year of the evaluation cycle and other observations as determined by local policy in the formative years.</p>
Informal Observations:	Informal observations are less than a full instructional period,

	approximately 15-20 minutes. These observations may be either arranged in advance or unannounced. They must include some oral or written feedback to the employee, but a formal post-conference and written observation report are not required unless specific deficiencies are noted.
Walk-through Observations:	A walk-through observation that lasts about 5-10 minutes, according to _____ is more effective ... In this brief classroom or workspace visit is generally unannounced and does not require any post-observation conference or written report.
Artifacts and Data:	Evaluators are encouraged to collect and analyze artifacts and data regarding the performance of teachers. These might include lesson plans, examples of parent work, and parent contact logs.
Perceptual Data:	At least once during the evaluation cycle, typically during the summative year, the evaluator arranges for a sampling of student perception (or stakeholder perception) via a student/stakeholder survey. The teacher will not be rated on the survey results but they will be used to help the evaluator identify a teacher's areas of strength and improvement to better target professional development and support.
<u>Student Achievement/Performance Data:</u>	<p>On an annual basis, teachers develop and implement a Student Learning Objectives plan. Each teacher will have two SLOs per year. The Nebraska Department of Education has provided a rubric for teachers and principals to evaluate Student Learning Objectives. It consists of three elements and four levels of proficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and rigor of the objective/targets • Effectiveness in implementing the planning strategies • Accomplishment of the SLO goals <p>These three elements are reviewed for each SLO with the teacher and a combined rating is transmitted to the Summative Evaluation Form. The combined rating reflects both the degree to which the objective/targets were met and the degrees to which the SLO reflected a challenging plan that was implemented effectively. The key determination is whether the teacher/specialist made a positive impact on student learning.</p> <p>Teachers and administrators customize growth targets for the specific classroom, school, and district contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Growth Target: All students have the same growth target. • Simple Average Growth Target: Growth targets are determined by a common formula, but each student has a

	<p>different growth target based on his or her pre-assessment score. All students will improve to the halfway point between their pre-assessment score and 100.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered Growth Target: Group students together based on their pre-assessment scores. Divide all students within a specific performance band (high-middle-low) will improve to a pre-determined score • Advanced Tiered Growth Target: all students within a specific performance band (high-middle-low) will improve to a pre-determined score or by a certain amount of points, whichever is higher.
Professional Development Data:	<p>The primary purpose of the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Evaluation Model is the improvement of instruction and leadership leading to increased student achievement. On an annual basis, teachers develop and implement an Individual Professional Development plan based on the results of the employee's most recent summative evaluation. The educator and evaluator schedule brief conferences throughout the year to discuss progress on the Individual Development Plan before a summative evaluation at the end of the evaluation cycle. The rubric for evaluating the Individual Development Plan consists of three elements rated across the four levels of proficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and rigor of the Individual Professional Development Plan • Effectiveness in implementing the planned strategies • Accomplishment of the plan's goals.
Self-Assessment/Reflection:	<p>The use of self-assessment/reflection in the evaluation process is encouraged but not required.</p>

Principal Evaluation Process:

Evaluation of administrative performance is intended to be a collaborative process that focuses on professional development and continuous improvement. Administrators in probationary status are on an annual evaluation cycle consisting of a formative evaluation during the first semester and a summative evaluation during the second semester. Each evaluation includes a formal observation as well as informal and walk-through observations. The second semester evaluation is summative and includes the ratings from the administrator's Action Plan performance. Permanent administrators (tenured) may have up to a three-year evaluation cycle that includes two years of annual formative evaluations and one year of summative evaluation determined by ratings on the Action Plan.

Principal Evaluation Model:

Leadership Practice:	<p>The Eight Effective Practices in the <i>Nebraska Principal Performance Framework</i> form the basis for the evaluation of leadership practice. These are evaluated using a set of rubrics with example behaviors and sources of evidence. The Nebraska Effective Practices have been aligned with three nationally-recognized leadership frameworks: Robert Marzano’s administrative leadership framework; Douglas Reeves’ Leadership Performance Matrix, and the McRel Principal Evaluation Rubric.</p>
Action Plans:	<p>Evaluation of a principal or school/district administrator’s impact on student achievement is determined through goals developed in an administrator’s Action Plan. Goals and action plans are collaboratively developed by the principal or school/district administrator and the evaluator annually. Measures of school performance that may be considered in development of Action Plans include measures of student learning, graduation rates, measures of school climate or culture, measures of the principal’s influence on instructional quality, and measures of stakeholder perception. The plan will be implemented at the beginning of the academic year and will be based on the most current data available. Like the use of Student Learning Objectives in the Teacher Evaluation Model, the use of Action Plans in the Principal Evaluation Model is designed to assess the outcomes of work that the principal or school/district administrator does in the course of his or her job.</p> <p><u>Key Features of Action Plans:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification of real barriers to student/school performance based on data analysis • A clear problem statement supported by data • One or more performance targets written in specific, measurable terms • A specific interval of time in which to address the problem • Planned actions or strategies to reduce or eliminate the problem • The use of a variety of data sources, including stakeholder perception, to assess results <p><u>Steps in Developing Action Plans:</u></p> <p><u>Step 1:</u> Identifying a problem or barrier that stands in the way of higher student achievement, staff effectiveness, or school or district performance.</p> <p><u>Step 2:</u> Use baseline data to analyze and define the problem statement</p> <p><u>Step 3:</u> Write a performance target statement, in specific and measurable terms, designed to overcome the problem.</p> <p><u>Step 4:</u> Identify data points or other sources of measurement that will be used to measure progress.</p> <p><u>Step 5:</u> Identify the action steps or strategies that will be taken to attain the</p>

	<p>performance target.</p> <p><u>Step 6:</u> Identify persons or groups responsible for implementing action steps or strategies.</p>
Professional Development:	Professional development efforts for principals and school/district administrators is evaluated through the annual rating of an individual Professional Development Plan.
Local Standards:	Districts may adopt additional local principals or school/districts that will be rated as met/not met. These standards will not contribute to the overall rating of a principal or school/district administrator's summative ranking from the four performance levels.
Overall Performance:	Evaluation of the Action Plan includes an assessment of the quality and rigor of the plan, the implementation of strategies designed to achieve the plan's goals, and the plan's results.
Perceptual Data:	<p>The Principal Evaluation Model includes a school-wide measure of student, staff, parent, or community perception data. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership surveys that provide feedback on the principal/administrator performance and its impact on stakeholders. • School practice surveys that capture feedback related to key strategies, actions, and events at school. • School climate surveys that look for stakeholder perceptions of a school or district's prevailing attitudes, standards, and conditions. <p>Principals and administrators are not rated on survey results, however, results provide data to assist the evaluator and administrator in identifying areas of strength and areas of professional growth for planning and other leadership development. Stakeholder perception data has an important role in developing Individual Professional Development Plans.</p>

Principal Evaluation Process:

Formal Observations:	Formal on-site observations of a principal or district administrator includes advance notice of the time and date of the observation, a pre-observation conference with the observer, a post observation conference, and a written report summarizing strengths and suggestions for improvement along with a plan for supporting growth.
Informal Observations:	Informal on-site observations (approximately 15-20 minutes) may be pre-announced or unannounced. They include oral or written feedback to the administrator, but a formal post-conference and written observation report are not required unless specific

	deficiencies are noted. Any identified deficiencies outlined in a written report also include strategies and assistance for professional development and support for the administrator.
Walk-through Observations:	Walk-through observations are brief in duration (approximately 5-10 minutes) and for the purpose of monitoring the administrative process are generally unannounced and do not require a conference or required written report unless deficiencies are noted. Any identified deficiencies outlined in a written report also include strategies and assistance for professional development and support for the administrator.
Data/Artifacts:	Evaluators are encouraged to collect and analyze data regarding the performance of principals and other school/district administrators. Such artifacts might include student, parent/community, and faculty communications; agendas, schedules and other management communications; student achievement data analyses; feedback to teachers following observations; and such other reports, plans, and similar documents.
Perception Data:	At least once in the evaluation cycle, typically during the summative year, the evaluator arranges for a sampling of stakeholder perception data via a perception data survey. The principal or district administrator will not be rated on the survey results, rather, the information gathered is used to help the evaluator and administrator identify areas of strength and areas for targeted professional development in the Action Plan.
Student Achievement/School or Program Performance Data:	On an annual basis, principals and district administrators develop, revise, and implement their Action Plan designed to improve student achievement or school or program performance. The Nebraska Department of Education provides a rubric that rates (across four performance levels) the plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and rigor of the Action Plan • Effectiveness in implementing the Action Plan strategies • Accomplishment of the Action Plan goals
Professional Development Data:	Each year the principal or district administrator, develops and implements an Individual Professional Development Plan in collaboration with his or her evaluator. The Nebraska Department of Education provides a template for the development of this plan based on the results of the administrator's most recent summative evaluation. The evaluation of the Individual Professional Development Plan includes an assessment of the quality and rigor of the professional development goals, the implementation of the

	strategies, and the plan's results.
Self-assessment/Reflection:	The use of principal/district administrator self-assessment is a recommended but not mandatory element of the overall evaluation.

3.B ENSURE LEAs IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- 3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

The Nebraska State Board of Education approved Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to develop a Teacher and Principal Evaluation model for voluntary implementation by districts. This model was to focus on improvement and student growth and build on the capacity districts have in place. NDE created a stakeholder group including teachers, administrators and representatives from ESUs on the steering committee. They also gathered feedback from a variety of policymakers and key stakeholders including the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska Educator's Association, the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and the Nebraska Association of Personnel Administrators. In July of 2011, the Nebraska Department of Education hosted a series of public forums and gathered feedback through an online survey.

Phases of Implementation:

Phase I: Leadership/Steering Committee--Spring, Summer, Fall 2012
Phase II: Design/Training Phase--2012-2013
Phase III: Pilot School Implementation--2013-2014 and 2014-2015
Phase IV: Voluntary Statewide Implementation 2015-2016

Seventeen districts piloted the Teacher and Principal Evaluation model in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

This section will continue to be developed with input from pilot school districts and ESU representatives.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR PLAN

Below is one example of a format an SEA may use to provide a plan to meet a particular principle in the *ESEA Flexibility*.

Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Party or Parties Responsible	Evidence (Attachment)	Resources (e.g., staff time, additional funding)	Significant Obstacles